Territorial Proportionality

A FAIR APPROACH TO VOTING

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION
DE LA REPRÉSENTATION ÉLECTORALE

DQE-669

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Sainte-Foy, le 28 mars 1984

Monsieur Richard Guay
Président de l'Assemblée nationale
Gouvernement du Québec
Québec

Monsieur le Président,

Nous avons l'honneur de vous transmettre, conformément aux dispositions du troisième alinéa de l'article 2 de la Loi sur la représentation électorale (L.R.Q., c. R-24.1) et au mandat confié à la Commission de la représentation par l'Assemblée nationale, le 22 juin 1983, un rapport ayant pour titre: *Pour un mode de scrutin équitable. La proportionnelle territoriale*, en date du 28 mars 1984.

Acceptez, monsieur le Président, l'expression de notre très haute considération.

Pierre-F. Côté, C.R.,
Président

Guy Bourassa,
Commissaire

Marc-André Lessard,
Commissaire

Me Eddy Gigière,
Secrétaire

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Paragraph one of Section 22 of the Act respecting electoral representation (R.S.Q., chapter R-24.1) reads as follows:

"The Director General of Elections shall, in the discharge of his duties, provide the Commission with all required assistance, including that of his personnel."

Although the Act required this collaboration, members of the Commission cannot help but extend their most sincere thanks to the entire staff of the Directeur général des élections for their outstanding contribution in the completion of the Commission's mandate from the National Assembly.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to acknowledge each contributor owing to the diverse nature of the tasks entailed in the preparation of this report. Nonetheless, the Commission would like to make special mention of the competence that all contributors demonstrated in completing their work.

The tight deadlines met for the completion of this mandate and the scope of the project testify to the intense efforts of all contributors. The Commission would like to express its heartfelt gratitude for these exceptional endeavours.

The masculine gender has been used throughout this text for purposes of simplification. No discrimination should be adduced.

SUMMARY

SUMMARY

Introduction

Many may well be astonished to learn that the first pages of this report are devoted to a wrap-up of its recommendations. Simply put, this summary has been designed to convey the essence of the report to as many readers as possible. The highly technical language used in the report was a motivating factor in drawing up this summary. Moreover, many readers are justifiably reluctant to study closely, let alone peruse, a hefty tome on a subject which, in all frankness, is somewhat arid.

Specialized terms and expressions flow through the text of this document, and it is therefore in the text itself that the whys and wherefores of the issues are examined in detail.

1. THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MANDATES THE COMMISSION TO EXAMINE THE ISSUES

At the beginning of the Summer of 1983, the National Assembly unanimously requested that the Commission study the traditional procedures used for the election of its members. The Commission was asked to review the pros and cons of the current electoral system and also to examine all other proposed voting systems and methods. The National Assembly also charged the Commission to hold public hearings across Québec to ascertain and assess population reaction, the views of organizations and the opinions of the members themselves.

The Commissioners were given the choice of submitting recommendations in the report they must table before the end of March 1984.

2. THE LIVELY INTEREST

During 19 days of hearings held in ten cities across Québec, 184 participants, individually or on behalf of their organizations or associations, submitted briefs to the Commission.

Some 60 briefs and 202 opinion forms also arrived at the offices of the Commission. These opinion forms were included inside information flyers distributed at 2328 drop-off points across Québec.

The media not only actively reacted to the Commission's invitation to participate but carefully and generously examined the issues in response to the concerns of their reading, viewing and listening publics. This lively media interest resulted in 114 interview and 29 conference sessions with the editorial and press corps. Media coverage in the press exceeded 150 articles and editorials in daily and weekly newspapers, and more than 100 reports and interviews on radio and television were devoted to the issues. Even the most optimistic expectations were surpassed. In short, media attention clearly highlighted the importance of the issues.

3. THE CRUX OF OPINION: NEED FOR A CHANGE

The lively interest in the issues together with the opinions expressed by participants throughout September to December 1983 clearly militate in favour of an overhaul of the traditional procedures used for the election of members to the National Assembly. Most participants favouring change were inclined to the view that Québec should endow itself with an electoral system following the model of proportional representation.

The fundamental rationale for this position is that the current polling method in use in Québec results in too great of a spread between the number of votes a party obtains and the number of members it elects. All too often, the current system results in an unfair portrait of the choice of the majority of voters, and on occasion, brings about situations quite contrary to the wishes of the majority of voters.

Proportional voting is a system specially structured to remedy, to the greatest extent possible, this state of affairs. It is designed to restore a more even balance and establish a more equitable proportion between the number of votes cast for a political party and the number of members it elects to sit in the National Assembly.

4. THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission observed the state of public opinion on the current voting system. It carefully examined the different formulas proposed by the healthy number of participants. The Commission analytically reviewed the solutions used in other countries, and it inescapably concluded that the present electoral system in Quebec must be replaced by proportional voting. The Commission dismissed run-of-the-mill solutions in favour of a system tailored to respond to Québec's needs. This stance resulted from the Commission's tour of Québec and from what was said and written. It constitutes the firm opinion of the Commissioners and the fruit of their efforts.

5. A RECOMMENDATION: TERRITORIAL PROPORTIONALITY

5.1 Territorial Proportionality

The Commission was free to make a proposal, and it has done so only after working out and reflecting on the issues to the fullest extent. The Commission is forced to conclude that people want a change and that this change must pattern itself on today's Québec.

Québec's personality must be respected when implementing any new electoral system. Not only has the Commission so noted, stated and concluded, but it strongly believes that its recommendation should be adopted. The Commission recommends that Québec use a voting system called Territorial Proportionality, subject to certain adjustments and exceptions.

Proportionality - a fair approach to voting. In other words, a system for electing members which does democracy proud and which is the closest possible reflection of the voters' wishes. A proportional voting system may still result in differences between the percentage of votes cast in favour of a candidate and the percentage of elected members of a given political party, but generally speaking, this difference is minimal.

Territorial Proportionality - a thoroughly modern and Québec-oriented way to vote. The province will be mapped into electoral territories grounded on the actual distribution and location of its population. It rejects zoning Québec into natural regions which, moreover, do not exist (except rarely). These «natural regions» were dismissed as the foundation for the boundaries of electoral divisions.

Territorial Proportionality results in a greatly reduced number of electoral divisions. There may only be twenty electoral divisions or so, instead of 122. In order to maintain approximately the same number of members as currently sit in the Assembly, each «territory», as an electoral division, will elect from a minimum of three to twenty members depending on its size and its voter population.

6. A QUEBEC-TAILORED VOTING SYSTEM

Based on clear and unequivocal evidence, the Commission has observed that Québec has a number of special features which cannot be overlooked

and which must be acknowledged when selecting a new electoral system. There is a risk of missing the mark when the importance of these special features are discounted.

They are:

1. Concentration of the population;
2. Dispersal of the population over vast territories;
3. Iles-de-la-Madeleine;
4. Presence of ethnic and cultural minorities;
5. Pluralism of Québec society;
6. Native peoples.

6.1 Concentration of the population

Most Québecers live in urban agglomerations, especially on the Island of Montreal and Ile-Jésus. Other large urban centres are: Québec, Chicoutimi/Jonquière, Trois-Rivières/Shawinigan, Hull and Sherbrooke.

Territorial Proportionality must adapt to this situation. Densely populated urban areas should have more members sitting in the National Assembly than other territories.

6.2 Dispersal of the population: plus one

The population of Québec is intensely concentrated over a relatively confined space. Québec is also noted for vast territories with scattered

populations, i.e. along the banks of the St. Lawrence River or across far-stretching expanses.

Some territories have special requirements as a result of distances. The Commission has singled out three such territories on the basis of its findings: the North Shore, Abitibi/Témiscamingue and the Gaspé/Iles-de-la-Madeleine. Sheer distances make any contact between the electorate and their members difficult; consequently, their members are greatly hindered in discharging their mandate. In these cases, a departure is justified from the rule advocating the highest possible numerical equality among all electoral divisions (with exceptions) for purposes of electoral representation. The Commission believes that one additional member must arbitrarily be added for each of these three territories even if normally the number of voters alone would not authorize such an addition.

6.3 Iles-de-la-Madeleine

As outlined above, Iles-de-la-Madeleine form part of the same territory as the Gaspé. It could have been otherwise. The Islands' inhabitants feel isolated - and with good reason. Whether or not the residents of Iles-de-la-Madeleine should receive preferential treatment at the time of implementation of a new electoral system is a matter for the legislator, but favourable treatment is quite conceivable. The legislator may decide to maintain the actual electoral system for the Islanders and thereby continue to guarantee that they will have their own representative sitting in the National Assembly.

6.4 Respect for Minorities

The fairness and understanding which Quebecers have always shown to ethnic or linguistic minorities must be very much present in the practical implementation of any electoral system.
Territorial Proportionality must apply in such a way that minorities, and particularly the largest linguistic minority, are fairly represented. It is essential that minorities find themselves in the National Assembly.

6.5 Pluralism

Québec is a pluralistic society. Many differing ideas and trends evolve and come into contact one with the other as is the case in any developed society. In the past 25 years, Québec has sustained unceasing development - an evolution which might even be described as a revolution and which has given rise to dramatic changes. Territorial Proportionality acknowledges this rapid evolution and has been designed to allow the growth of new ideas in the National Assembly without bringing in its wake any chronic instability in government.

Territorial Proportionality will also facilitate representation of different social groups or classes of voters because of the greater number of seats available in electoral divisions.

6.6 Native Peoples

It is surprising to discover that Québec's first inhabitants are not represented by a member in the National Assembly. Some want to be represented. How can they be refused such a basic right? The Commission recommends that they have one representative in the National Assembly. However, this member would be elected under the current voting system because it is impossible to implement, in this instance, the minimum requirements for Territorial Proportionality, i.e. a minimum of three members per electoral division.

7. A MADE-TO-MEASURE MAP

An electoral map which determines electoral divisions and accurately reflects geographical facts, does not submerge minorities, takes pains to allow new ideas to see the light of day in the National Assembly, respects insofar as possible the needs of the residents of Iles-de-la-Madeleine, gives fair representation to native peoples, and prioritizes three territories to ensure that voters have their fair share of members - these are the Commission's proposals.

8. ELECTORAL MAPPING OPTIONS

The Commission has proposed two options in electoral mapping. Maps detailing these options are attached to the report. The first option calls for 22 electoral divisions, with one exception, and 125 members. The second option proposes 24 electoral divisions, with

one exception, and 127 members.

9. ASSESSMENT

Is Territorial Proportionality a perfect electoral system? No, such a system does not exist. Its principal advantage lies in that it significantly reduces the differences between the percentage of votes cast and the percentage of members elected. It is a fair system and will not give rise to absurd discrepancies. At worst, it allows for quite acceptable margins.

10. ADDITIONAL BUT EQUALLY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

The Commission does not consider it advisable to table recommendations on all aspects involved in the implementation of this new voting proposal. Rather, it has directed its attention to disclosing simple preferences, and it leaves the legislator with the careful task of filling in the details. The Commission was preoccupied with essential matters, i.e. Territorial Proportionality. The rest will fall into place in due course.

10.1 Number of Members

It would be desirable if the number of members sitting in the National Assembly could remain at approximately current numbers, i.e. 122. If it is not possible to do otherwise, it should be increased by only a few seats. The working models used have been structured on the basis of more than 122 seats.

They have been aligned this way to better illustrate the electoral system possibilities which the Commission recommends. Nothing, however, prevents other hypotheses using the same number of members as now exist or even using fewer members.

10.2 Candidate Lists

Candidate lists must remain the prerogative of political parties. However, parties must take all measures to submit candidate lists which reflect the location of voters throughout a territory whenever a territory stretches far and wide.

Names of candidates on the list may be set out on the ballots in the order established by the political parties. Although this possibility has been left to the parties themselves, the Commission believes that it would be highly preferable that the voter himself proudly and freely indicate the candidate of his choice on the ballot. In short, the voter should be allowed to take up the banner. Democracy dictates that we fully meet its requirements.

10.3 The Vote

On the basis of the foregoing, the Commission proposes that the voter cast his ballot in the following manner:

(a) only for the political party of his choice - in this case,

he will automatically vote for all candidates of this party on the list according to their specified order (it is like voting for a «blocked list»);

(b) or for the political party and for the candidates of his choice wherever their names may appear on the ballot - and whatever their political allegiance may be - (it is like voting for an «open list»).

Any voter who intends to cast his ballot for an independent candidate will vote as follows. It is important, however, to stress that Independent candidates are treated on the same basis as political parties. Consequently, the voter:

(a) will vote only for the independent candidate of his choice, or

(b) will vote for the independent candidate of his choice and for as many candidates as there are seats up for election less one.

10.4 Vacancies

The Commission proposes that in the future there shall be no further need for by-elections. It also proposes that members will not be allowed to sit as independents during the term of their mandate if they have not

been elected as such. When, in a given electoral division, a member's seat becomes vacant, for any reason whatsoever, it can be filled as follows:

1. the unelected candidate whose name appears on the list for the same political party but who did not obtain votes sufficient for election, would be the first to fill the vacant seat, and so on and so forth, until the names on the list have been exhausted;

2. when the list of candidates entered on the ballot-paper has been exhausted, a vacancy would be filled from among a list of substitutes chosen by the political party. This list - containing a predetermined number of names - would be published at the time of the general elections.

These issues and any other electoral matters, such as the financing of political parties will be adapted to Territorial Proportionality and are capable of resolution. All these matters can be simply accomplished and expressed. All that is required is a strong sense of democracy and a healthy dose of goodwill by everyone.

CONCLUSION

The Commission strongly recommends that over the course of the next few years detailed studies be conducted on the implementation of this new electoral system to suggest improvements. No electoral system is everlasting; all systems can be perfected. The Commission is convinced that far from resisting the adoption of a new electoral system, the population will react favourably and will welcome such a change. Voters adjust more easily than is sometimes believed, and this is especially true when the population is sufficiently informed.

Only the members of the National Assembly can make this change. The time is now. Their chief responsibility consists in deciding whether the report of the Commission should be adopted, whether it would be advisable to adopt an electoral system other than that recommended by the Commission, or whether the status quo should be maintained. No one may usurp their functions; they are masters of the laws and any change in the voting method will require new electoral legislation. The quest for a wider-ranging democracy must not mask the fact that the current members of the National Assembly have been democratically invested with the decision-making power. The order of priorities and the means and steps to do or not to do anything lie squarely in their domain. We must defer to this authority - an authority which we, as voters, have conferred.

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INTRODUCTION

Debate on the electoral system has for a long time sparked the interest of observers of the Québec political scene. However, until the beginning of the 1960s, tensions surfacing from the electoral system debate were minor and relatively little controversy surrounded the subject. Later, with the arrival of new political groups and a wider range of viewpoints on democracy and its institutions, the single-member one-ballot system was battered with criticism. It has been specifically singled out for encouraging distortions in representation and these distortions compromise the legitimate foundation of our political system. A full-scale debate is now taking place on the need to correct or not to correct these defects. Numerous articles and commentaries written by experts on the issue liven the debate and each expert spars with his colleagues to find a new system that most ably conveys the different political forces on the parliamentary level.

For their own part, governments, although they have not questioned the lawfulness of their office, have demonstrated a willingness to reform or at least to improve our electoral system. Two examples exemplify their efforts: the creation in 1971 of a working group on electoral systems, the "Comité d'étude sur les modes de scrutin", and, the creation in 1976 of the office of "Ministre d'État à la Réforme électorale et parlementaire".

Immediately following the 1970 elections, the Liberal government without delay initiated debate on electoral reform issues and especially the polling method. The Prime Minister asked the Standing Committee of the National Assembly to work out major guidelines that could be used for future reform. After having heard a number of specialists, whose views were far from unanimous, the Standing Committee set up a working group on 25 November 1971: to provide an evaluation of the present electoral system, to prepare a list of the principles and structures of the main voting systems, by highlighting the advantages and disadvantages particular to each and, finally, to propose practical options for Québec in view of the likely consequences on our political lifestyle.

The Committee tabled its report in June 1972. It deplored the lack of time and necessary resources to allow it to define and to scientifically verify the value of a single-member one-ballot voting system and the impact of other electoral

systems on Québec society. It also squarely handed over the debate to the National Assembly and stated: "No other body, no other person is better equipped than the Standing Committee of the National Assembly to deal with electoral system issues". The report of the working group did not resolve the issue and the deadlock that confronted in turn both the Standing Committee and the working group encouraged the government to abandon any proposal for reform.

In 1976, the Parti Québecois government revived the issue of voting reform by creating the office of "Ministre d'État à la Réforme électorale et parlementaire". In April 1979, the Minister tabled his Green Paper on electoral reform as a reply to his mandate from the cabinet, i.e. to study the possibility of introducing in our electoral system a method of representation based on the proportion of votes cast.

The Green Paper analyzed the present system and proposed three possible solutions for reform. The Minister targeted his report to attain the objectives of acting as both an organ of information and a vehicle for consultation. He believed that the government must know whether the systems under discussion could be assimilated by the electorate thereby preventing a reform out of touch with Québec realities, in keeping with the adage that electoral law is the paramount right of the electorate and not the exclusive preserve of politicians.

However, the Minister resigned several months after, and his consultation document had very little concrete follow-up. His successor in office took up the issue once again at the end of September 1979, but it was only in June 1982 that the Minister made public consultation documents that detailed two options for reform of the electoral system. Interested readers should refer to Schedule A for a complete history of the evolution of electoral reform debate in Québec.

The present government has already disclosed on several occasions its intention to proceed with an assessment of the present electoral system and a study of the different options that could be used to modify or replace it. In the Spring of 1983, the government considered mandating an ad hoc parliamentary committee. This solution was not accepted and the Conseil consultatif which was asked to consider this issue in May 1983, reached an impasse. The National Assembly was anxious to obtain the agreement of all parties on this important matter and decided to ask the Commission de la représentation électorale to evaluate the

the present electoral system and to study the different reform proposals. To enable the Commission to complete its mandate, the National Assembly amended the Electoral Representation Act on 22 June 1983, and, unanimously adopted the following resolution:

> "That, for the purposes of this mandate, the Commission, in close contact with the members of the Assemblée nationale, interested citizens and organizations:
>
> - Take the necessary measures to inform them;
> - Consult and gather their opinions publicly or in camera;
> - After having given notice thereof, hold public hearings in the various regions of Québec;
> - Study their representations as well as any other aspect linked to its mandate;
>
> That the Commission, within eight months, hand in a report to the Assemblée nationale, comprising a detailed analysis including the advantages and disadvantages of the present polling method, the different formulae suggested and its own recommendations, should the occasion arise;
>
> That the Commisssion, in carrying out its mandate, may have recourse to resource persons of the Civil Service."

On 21 December 1983, in light of the changes that the Commission was required to make to the proposed schedule for public hearings (owing to the large number of briefs submitted), the National Assembly extended the initial deadline for handing in the report from 22 February to 30 March 1984.

The Commission de la représentation électorale hereby delivers, in accordance with its mandate, the report on its study and evaluation of the present electoral system and on the different reform proposals contemplated for Québec. Because of the truly original scope of its mandate, this is the first time the Québec public has been consulted on this issue. In the first part of its report the Commission sets out an account of this opinion gathering. The second part of the report is devoted to the Commission's views on the electoral system.

When studying reform of the electoral system it is only normal that the Commission was induced to consider the possibility of reforming at the same time other aspects of our political institutions. Even if the electoral system is closely tied to the overall political system, the Commission did not consider its mandate to study or to recommend change to our parliamentary system or essential elements of this system just because this or that electoral system would fit in better. Rather, it is the opposite mandate that the National Assembly conferred on 22 June last: to evaluate whether it is necessary to change the electoral system given the parliamentary system we have.

Accordingly, although the Commission considered and analyzed all views submitted to it on different aspects in connection with its mandate, the Commission de la représentation électorale reached the conclusion that it was not within the scope of its duty to give an opinion on issues other than the electoral system.

PART 1

FINDINGS OF THE CONSULTATION

CHAPTER 1

METHODS FOR DISCHARGING ITS MANDATE

1.1 OPINION POLL

Several days after being equipped with this new mandate, the Commission de la représentation électorale considered what means it might use to inform and to poll the opinions of citizens and organizations. As a first step, it was essential to poll the population to determine its level of comprehension and to uncover its interest in the electoral system and related issues. The Commission also wanted to ascertain the degree of satisfaction or the reasons for dissatisfaction of the public vis-à-vis the present electoral system, to endeavour to determine their level of knowledge on the proposed changes and to evaluate their perception of the rôle of members in the National Assembly.

The Commission retained the services of a firm specializing in communications to complete its opinion poll. A total of 705 respondents across Québec participated, during the week of 18 July 1983, in a quantitative study carried out by telephone interviews. The Commission published the findings of this poll during a 14 September press conference.

The study tends to show that generally the population is not familiar with electoral system vocabulary. When asked about the present electoral system, although 75% of the respondents declared that they were satisfied, more than one in two (51.5%) respondents hoped for changes. Although most respondents, i.e. 66.6%, were not aware that possible changes to the electoral system are envisaged, once informed of the eventuality of a reform, more than 60% showed interest in the subject. Additionally, nearly 65% of individuals questioned considered that the proposed changes should be implemented before the next general elections. Finally, it is noteworthy that nearly 60% of respondents considered the primary duty of a member to adequately represent his constituents and to inform the government of the needs of his constituency.

Findings of the poll enabled the Commission to get a better grasp on the steps that it would have to take to complete, within its short deadline, the mandate conferred by the National Assembly.

1.2 INFORMING THE PUBLIC

Because the polling disclosed the electorate's widespread lack of knowledge on the electoral system, the electoral vocabulary and options for replacing this system, the Commission considered several information scenarios. However, the economic situation did not lend itself to large-budget projects for this purpose and, although the Commission spent some money on advertising to inform the public, it devoted more attention to the distribution of an information flyer, to the participation of the media and to the use of human resources seconded by the Directeur général des élections.

1.2.1 Advertising

Since this has been the first time in Québec that the population has been consulted on polling issues, the Commission considered that its duty was to highlight this facet of its mandate. For this purpose it chose the advertising theme of "Votre opinion gagne à être connue" (Your opinion matters!); this slogan permitted it to emphasize the impact of each individual's opinion in this fundamental opinion gathering.

The Commission's advertising strategy was aimed to gather opinions from the maximum number of individuals despite tight budgetary controls. It was therefore directed only to the written media. Two announcements appeared in 12 dailies and 79 weeklies across the province. The first announcement set out the mandate of the Commission and the list of municipalities where public hearings would be held. The second, and shorter, message publicized the date of each hearing.

1.2.2 Information

Information flyers

The Commission placed within the reach of the entire public a basic information brochure in the form of a flyer. Printed in a half million copies, this pamphlet was widely distributed: 2 328 locations across the province. At the end of September a first printing of the brochure was delivered to 658 drop-off points:

Manpower Centres - Québec	(154)
Hospital Centres	(225)
CRSSs	(13)
CLSCs	(125)
CSSs	(16)
Famili-Prix Pharmacies	(100)
Communication-Québec	(24)
Hôtel du Parlement	(1)

On 22 October a second printing was sent out through the Caisses populaires et d'économie Desjardins du Québec network, i.e. 1 670 Caisses or service points.

The advertising theme used for the flyer "Elections. Can everybody win them?" was designed to encourage the electorate to reflect on the importance of choosing an electoral system that ensures the fairest possible representation of the popular vote at election time. The flyer also explained the Commission's mandate and how the public could make known its opinion. The flyer set out the principal types of electoral and polling systems under study in Québec. It also invited individuals seeking further information to contact the office of the Commission directly.

Video

With a view to diversifying efforts in the information field and to reaching specific target groups, an audiovisual presentation was produced and distributed: 22 cassettes were given to the information media during the hearings; 88 were sent to teaching institutions and to cable companies. As a teaching tool, the video considered in a more detailed format the basic information contained in the flyer. Moreover, it was shown at the outset of most of the public hearings held by the Commission.

Television shows

On 22 October the TVA television network presented, as part of its "Justice pour tous" series, a half hour of information on electoral systems and on the mandate of the Commission. Produced by the Commission des services juridiques, this increasingly well-known series is designed to make government information palatable

1.2.3 Public relations

The Commission heavily accented working with the media to significantly support distribution of a part of the information tied to its mandate.

Within this context, an impressive number of interviews (114) took place and several meetings (29) were organized with the editorial and press corps. Media participation was needed throughout the tour of Québec, especially in the outlying regions where electronic media were used for interviews during information or public affairs shows and for reports during the newstimes. Similarly, the Commission would also like to mention the cooperation of community-based media. Their attendance at almost all press briefings allowed for the full-length communication of several information sessions as well as the showing of the video during special programs.

Many of the interviews granted were designed to outline the content of the hearings and to allow the population to closely follow the latest developments on electoral system issues.

If media coverage over a three-month period is any indication, the conclusion is that objectives in the communication field were accomplished in large part owing to cooperation of all media. In fact, a partial analysis of the press discloses that coverage in dailies and weeklies exceeded 150 reports and editorials. In the electronic media, more than 100 reports and interviews took place; this figure does not count news bulletins transmitted outside Montréal and Québec nor does it include replays of this information.

1.2.4 Information Centre

Whether through advertising, press releases, information sessions, the flyer or numerous letters sent to different groups and organizations, the population was asked to contact the Information Centre of the Directeur général des élections. This Centre was specially oriented by the Commission for this purpose. The Centre's rôle encompassed a number of functions such as replying to requests for information and documentation, as well as transcribing the comments of individuals who wanted to 'phone in their opinion.

Between 14 September and 31 December 1983, information officers replied to some 594 requests. A total of 2 860 documents were sent out to 285 individuals who asked for further information.

1.3 OPINION GATHERING

The Commission was aware of the importance attached to this first consultation and wanted to offer the public a number of ways of expressing its views. Accordingly, the Commission invited Quebecers to explain their views during the public hearings, but also allowed them to forward their comments by mail or express their opinions by telephone.

1.3.1 Public hearings

The Commission originally planned to hold 13 public hearings in 10 cities across Québec between 3 October and 30 November. However, given the large number of briefs submitted during these hearings, the Commission had to change its schedule and add 6 days of hearings. The schedule was as follows:

PUBLIC AND IN CAMERA HEARINGS

CITIES	DATES
QUÉBEC	3 and 31 October, 7 November, 21 December
SEPT-ILES	11 October
GASPÉ	17 October
RIMOUSKI	18 October
NORANDA	25 October
CHICOUTIMI	1 November
TROIS-RIVIÈRES	8 and 9 November
SHERBROOKE	15 November
HULL	22 November
MONTRÉAL	28, 29 and 30 November 1, 13 and 14 December

Individuals or organizations who showed up for the hearings were allowed to express their views orally, by handing in a brief, or both. The Commission sat in the afternoon and in the evening to allow greater participation in the consultation process.

1.3.2 Mail and telephone

The Commission also offered the electorate the possibility of expressing their opinion by mail, whether by brief, letter or comment on the coupon designed for this purpose and included in the information flyer.

Finally, the Information Centre was responsible for transcribing the comments of individuals who wanted to express their views by telephone.

The following table sets out the total participation recorded according to target group and the type of communication used. The terms of the mandate, i.e. to consult members of the National Assembly, citizens and organizations are reflected in the heading "Target Group". The only change made to the target group structure was the addition of former MNAs in the category "Members of the National Assembly". The number of participants does not correspond to the number of viewpoints expressed since one participation may embrace the views of one or more individuals.

Table 1

PARTICIPATION RECORDED BY THE COMMISSION BETWEEN 14 SEPTEMBER AND 23 DECEMBER 1983

Method of Communication \ Target Group		Former Members and Members of the National Assembly	Citizens	Organizations	Total
Hearings:	Public	10	82	92	184
	In Camera	0	0	1	1
Mail:	Briefs	1	28	31	60
	Flyers	0	194	8	202
Telephone:		0	15	0	15
	TOTAL	11	319	132	462

This table shows that three times more individuals than organizations expressed their views on the electoral system. However, it should be emphasized that a very wide range of organizations expressed their views. The Commission received comments from organizations operating in the administration, cultural, economic, and education sectors, as well as in social, union, employer, political and other fields. Interested readers will find a list of these organizations in Schedule C.

It should also be mentioned that the method of communication preferred by organizations was the brief handed in on the occasion of the public hearings (69%), whereas 60% of citizens preferred to use the reply coupon contained in the flyer to make their opinion known.

1.4 METHOD OF ANALYSIS OF OPINIONS

The Commission was concerned with expressing, as accurately as possible, this first consultation on electoral systems. Accordingly, it required a systematic analysis of all opinions received. Staff of the Directeur général des élections completed this work.

All representations were analyzed by using one single process: whether these representations took the form of short opinions or more substantial briefs, whether the participants were experts or not. The methodology used was principally directed at facilitating analysis of the opinions and the final synthesis that would result therefrom. Two tools were used for this purpose: an analytical grid and subject file cards. The analytical grid allowed an inventory to be drawn up on the content of each participation; subject file cards, with appropriate quotations, set out opinions and views on certain key themes and on the evaluation criteria of different electoral systems.

The method selected for the analysis was based on the need to obtain the most objective possible interpretation of opinions. This explains why two individuals closely reviewed all communications.

One person read the document, filled out the grid and at the same time completed subject file cards. Once this first examination had been completed, the file was sent, minus the grid, to the second analyst who repeated the operation: reading, compilation of the grid and completion of a subject file card (to add new

elements only). The two grids were then compared. In the case of disagreement, the two analysts had to agree together on the fairest possible interpretation.

This detailed analysis allowed the Commission to obtain, within a very short time after the hearings, a faithful report on its consultation and to ascertain the mainline position of participants on electoral system issues.

1.5 STUDY OF FOREIGN ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

To complete its information on different electoral systems, the Commission wanted to assemble the most information possible on electoral systems used in other countries. This research took place in three stages.

Firstly, as stated in the Act, the infrastructure of the Commission is composed of staff which the Directeur général des élections seconded to it for its mandate. Since 1982, the issue of electoral systems has preoccupied the Directeur général des élections. Staff of the research department had already compiled a basic file of all items relating to this issue. An impressive working document had been assembled and it specifically set out the evolution of work on reform in Québec, an analysis of the implications of the present majority system, as well as a study of different electoral systems used in a number of foreign countries. This document was distributed to individuals and organizations concerned by the issue and was used by the Commission as a basic working tool for its study of a number of electoral systems in force outside Québec.

In addition to relying on the expertise of its personnel, the Commission also wanted to ascertain the view of specialists on some aspects of foreign electoral systems. For this purpose, it consulted Mr. André Bernard, Professor of Political Science at the Université de Montréal. In fact, several of the briefs submitted to the Commission during the Fall of 1983 advanced the opinion that the adoption by Québec of a type of proportional representation would significantly reverberate on the Québec parliamentary system. Yet, other briefs held the contrary and concluded that no certain relationship exists between particular traits of different polling methods and the major features of different parliamentary systems. These two theses were illustrated by reference to experience abroad.

Faced with these two opposing viewpoints, the Commission thought it advisable to try to set out the facts. What are the actual characteristics of foreign

experiences referred to? Is there a causal relationship between the respective features of different systems, whether parliamentary or presidential, that are based on the so-called principle of representative democracy?

Professor Bernard drew up a table of similarities and differences that can be established between the Québec parliamentary system and foreign parliamentary systems where a type of proportional representation is used. He then evaluated the potential impact which each of the various electoral systems would have on the present Québec parliamentary system and identified the reforms that would bring about significant changes in the system. The findings of his research are available on request.

A third aspect of the Commission's study of foreign electoral systems was the trip taken by the Chairman of the Commission de la représentation to different European countries. This trip was structured to add pragmatism to the impressive documentation already assembled on a theoretical plane. The Commission asked its Chairman to take this trip after it had reached the conclusion that the practical implementation of different electoral systems might have side effects and spin-offs till now unreported in literature on the subject - although this literature is voluminous. Within this context Pierre-F. Côté undertook his information trip.

From 6 to 26 January 1984, the Chairman of the Commission went to Europe to study the different electoral systems and to consult on the spot with competent individuals. The countries visited were selected on the basis of the polling method used to allow the Commission to obtain the most representative sample possible of the various systems:

- Federal Republic of Germany, mixed system;
- Belgium and Switzerland, a proportional system;
- France, two-ballot majority system;
- Ireland, proportional system with single transferable vote;
- Great Britain, single-member one-ballot majority system.

During his trip, the Chairman had the opportunity to meet several well-known individuals working directly in elections and in related fields or pursuing an academic career. When at the outset one has a solid grounding in electoral systems, meetings of this type provide an inestimable well of practical and

complimentary knowledge that is impossible to find in literature alone. Additionally, supporting documentation brought back from these meetings is a very precious contribution to understanding the implementation difficulties that each polling method presents.

It would be redundant to itemize the details of each of the electoral systems of these countries. The overriding message from this six-country tour is that each country uses a voting system in tune with its political, social and geographic requirements. Each electoral system meets the features of a country and is not automatically transferable from one country to another, even within Europe. This observation has forced the Commission to further think out its position and to reach the conclusion that no electoral system can be imported, as is, into Québec.

A polling method is only one of the components of any democratic electoral system and cannot be overpraised or alone be held responsible for distortions, stability or instability. Democratic institutions of a country mirror its historical, geographical, sociological and economic conditions. A polling method must always be considered together with the other elements making up the democratic system.

Federal Republic of Germany: Bonn, Wiesbaden, Munich, Berlin and Hamburg

The Chairman's trip to the Federal Republic of Germany was the longest of his European stay and was the most interesting especially with respect to certain specific features of the implementation of its voting system, for example: the enormous importance given to political parties; the compilation of electoral lists; the originality of the ballot (including an important difference in Bavaria for the election of members of the Landstag), the postal vote and the use at certain locations of a highly well-designed automatic voting machine.

The Chairman had the honour of being received by:

Bonn

Dr. W. Schreiber, Information Officer for federal electoral legislation and Director of Elections for the Bundestag;
Dr. Erb, Bundesministerium des Innern (Federal Ministry of the Interior).

Wiesbaden

Mr. Egon Hoelder, Director General of Elections for the Federal Republic of Germany;
Mr. Lothar Herberger, his Assistant;
Messrs. Wuerzberger and Gaspers, Assistants of the latter;
Dr. J. Kaukars, Director General of Elections and Statistics for Hessen;
Mr. K. Beierer, her Assistant;
Dr. Schindler, City Clerk for Wiesbaden-Nordenstadt.

Dr. Schindler kindly demonstrated the voting machines and the manner in which the names of citizens are entered on the electoral register.

Munich

Mr. Reinhard Hoegner, Deputy Director General of Elections for Bavaria;
Mr. Wolfgang Vogelsgesang, Alderman for the city of Munich.

Berlin

Mr. Guenther Appel, Director General of Elections and Director of the Department of Statistics for West Berlin;
Mr. Rolf-Peter Magen, Senator fuer Inneres (Ministry of the Interior).

Hamburg

Dr. Erhard Hruschka, Director General of Elections and Director of Statistics for Hamburg

Belgium: Brussels

The Chairman had the occasion of meeting the following during his successful stay in Brussels:

Mr. Francis Delpérée, Professor of Public Law at the Université de Louvain-la-Neuve;
Senators Georges Gramme and Jacques Wathelet;
Mr. Claude Rémy, Chief Counsel to the Director General of the French Community Council;
Mr. Christian Daubie, Clerk and Secretary General of the French Community Council;
Mr. Jean-François Vandewalle, Director of Administration for the French Community Council

Switzerland: Geneva and Bern

The Chairman met the following in Switzerland:

Mr. Paolo Urio, Professor, Department of Political Science, Université de Genève;
Mr. Hans-Urs Wili of the Federal Chancellory at Bern;
Mr. Peter Mueller who holds the same office as Mr. Wili but for the Canton of Bern;
Mr. François de Couchepin, Vice-Chancellor;
Mr. Kurt Nuspliger of the Canton of Bern;
Mr. Pillo-Caslo Terenzio, Secretary General of the Interparliamentary Union;
Mr. Pierre Cornillon, Assistant to Mr. Terenzio, at the head office of the Interparliamentary Union;

France: Paris

In France, the Chairman had the pleasure of meeting with:

Mr. Alain Lancelôt, Professor at the Institut d'études politiques and Director of the Centre de la vie politique française contemporaine;
Mr. Jacques Cadart, Professor, Faculty of Law, Economics and Social Sciences at the Université de Paris 1 and Director of the Department of Political Science at Paris 2;
Mr. Jacques Leruez of the Centre d'Études et de Recherches internationales.

Mr. Cadart edited a book on electoral systems in 18 free countries of Western Europe. The Chairman had long discussions with Mr. Cadart, who emphasized that no absolute stance should be taken in voting system matters and that the power to choose one system over another must always and above all rest squarely with the electorate.

The Chairman of the Commission also had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Pierre Nicolaÿ, Vice-Chairman of the Conseil d'État and with Mr. Bernard Ducamin, Counsellor of State.

In the publication Études et Documents of the Conseil d'État, for December 1983 (no. 34), the Chairman published an article on the rôle of the Director General of Elections in electoral administration in Québec.

Ireland: Dublin

The Chairman was warmly received in Dublin. He was able to obtain first-hand information on the Irish electoral system, and met with:

Senator Sean O'Leary;
Mr. Niall Andrews, member of the Irish legislature;
Mr. Tim Sexton, Department of the Environment; this department is responsible for the application of the Electoral Act throughout the country;
Mr. Michael Hayes, Sheriff, City of Dublin, responsible for the application of the Electoral Act in Dublin.

Mr. Sean Whelan, Director General of Information, Department of External Affairs;
Mr. Branson, a member of the Irish legislature for the Fina-Fail party;
Mr. George Barry, political correspondent for the Sunday Tribune;
Mr. Mike Burns, Deputy director of TV News.

Great Britain: London

Finally, the Chairman met in London with the following:

Mr. Richard Holmes, Director of the Campaign for Fair Vote;
Mr. Richard Newby, General Secretary of the Social Democratic Party;
Mr. David Butler, Oxford Don, world renowned psephologist.

These highly successful meetings were made possible due to competence, cooperation and active participation of a number of individuals, including the Ministère des Affaires intergouvernementales and a number of Québec delegations. The Québec Delegate General in Brussels, Mr. Jean-Paul L'Allier and his staff, greatly facilitated the Chairman's meetings with Belgian officials. The Québec delegation in Paris organized meetings with French electoral experts, and the Québec Delegate General in London, Mr. Patrick Hyndman and his staff, helped organize the London and Dublin meetings. The Québec delegation in Dusseldorf also facilitated the Chairman's contacts in Germany, and his stay was organized by Dierk Meyerolbersleben, a Québecer of German origin. The Canadian Ambassadors kindly received the Chairman during his stay: Mr. Jacques Gignac, Ambassador to the European Economic Community, Mr. Michel de Goumois, Ambassador to Switzerland and Mr. Edgar Benson, Ambassador to Ireland.

Most special thanks to all those who expressed interest in the Commission's mandate and the attentive consideration of all in supplying the information and documents on the application and scope of their respective electoral systems. The Commission has greatly profited and these benefits can only help but encourage a better understanding of the electoral systems under study during this trip. Warm thanks to all who lent a helping hand.

CHAPTER 2

PRINCIPAL THEMES RELATED TO STUDYING AN ELECTORAL SYSTEM

We, as Québecers, live in a representative democracy. On election day, the population delegates its political power to a representative assembly, the National Assembly. Accordingly, a voting system may be defined as the mechanism used to determine who these representatives will be. Depending on the system chosen, greater or lesser differences may exist between the percentage of votes cast for the political parties and the percentage of members that each of these parties successfully elects.

Based on its experience during the consultation, the Commission de la représentation learned that the selection and the significance of the criteria used most often determine how different electoral systems can be assessed. Ideally, under a democratic system, a voting or polling method must allow for the election of a legislative assembly that mirrors as accurately as possible the society that has elected it. The voting method must also enable the formation of a government sufficiently strong to complete the major projects of that society. Additionally, a polling method must attune itself to the political development of a society, and a representative assembly for its own part must remain open to changes and be able to accommodate them.

Many Québecers submitted their views to the Commission de la représentation last Fall as to what they understood by a "good" polling method or what criteria, in their opinion, should be considered when proposing to improve this method. Five major themes emerge from among the criteria most often suggested and the arguments maintained as most significant. These themes are developed in this chapter: voter representation, territorial demarcation, the rôle of the member and parliamentary life, governmental stability and the rôle of political parties. Readers will first find a brief résumé of the issue and the relationship existing between each individual theme and the polling method. The second part of the exposé on each of these themes deals with what Québecers, in their views to the Commission, had to say about these subjects.

2.1 VOTER REPRESENTATION

2.1.1 Status

If democracy can be defined as the quest for maximum identification between the government and the governed, then the importance of knowing whether or not elected representatives effectively represent the electorate must be assessed. At first sight, universal suffrage appears to answer this question--all classes of citizens are represented on the same level without distinction as to race, sex or fortune. Yet the problem caused by the inequality of representation is not so easily resolved and the institution of universal suffrage can even aggravate it--the larger the electorate, the more difficult to ensure that elected representatives effectively represent the electorate.

Representatives in democratic countries are chosen during elections. The voter who casts his ballot for a representative votes for candidates most able to express the popular will. At the same time, representatives must be elected on the basis of their ability to express the needs and desires of the nation within the party framework to which they belong. The importance of a voting method can be instantly appreciated in the selection of members of a parliamentary assembly and accordingly, of the parties asked to form the government.

A voting method ensures perfect representation when the distribution of votes is faithfully reflected in the distribution of seats in parliament. In practice, no voting method is absolutely foolproof and free from the incursion of distortions in representativeness. The term "distortions" is used to mean the discrepancy between the percentage of seats held by a party in the Assembly and the percentage of votes cast by the electorate for that party. These distortions ordinarily arise from two main causes: poor mapping of electoral divisions unfairly favoring parliamentary representation of a particular group, and an inadequate voting method.

Many political analysts share the opinion that a one-ballot, single-member majority vote is the least well-suited method to match the proportion of votes obtained by the parties and their representation in the House. On the other hand, only an entirely proportional electoral system on a national scale would guarantee parties almost perfect representation. However, such a system, owing to the estrangement that it creates between a voter and his elected representative, diminishes the voter's desire to be represented. In a large country, this is not without danger for democracy.

The issue of representation therefore appears in three different ways: firstly, the mathematical approach to equality of votes: how many voters are there for each elected representative? The second aspect considers the equality of chances among parties to obtain a seat. In this connection, reference is often made to the effect of distortions on the base cost of a seat for the different parties. The cost is obtained by dividing the total votes that a party obtains by the number of seats allotted to it. By comparing these costs between parties or for the same party at different times, it can be quickly seen that the political significance of a member can vary considerably. A third aspect is related to this question of the cost of a seat: what chance do new parties have to sit in the Assembly? Does the voting method work for an expression of all trends and for the emergence of new ideas proposed by new parties? Does it allow for a pluralistic representation of society? Are different social groups adequately represented or, at least, have they a chance to be so represented?

Representation in Québec has for a long time been perceived as strictly a question of equality between votes. To ensure the same political weight to the vote of each citizen was the guiding principle that motivated a number of reforms of the electoral map. A new dimension was added to this essentially mathematical approach as a result of various social changes and the awareness of specific local features. This dimension was the introduction of the concept of socio-economic homogeneity in the determination of boundary lines for electoral divisions.

In a way, we began to improve the qualitative aspect of representation by endeavouring to pair electoral divisions with environments that have common characteristics and concerns. However, these changes to the electoral map have not resolved all problems of representativeness. In fact, it is the voting method and the voting formula that determine how votes are converted into seats, and this voting method appears to be the principal culprit for inequalities in representation.

2.1.2 Report on the opinions of participants

Several features of representation were highlighted during the consultation held by the Commission. Arguments raised in this connection emphasized improvement of the quality of representation, that is to say, the need to ensure fair representation for women, major social groups, native peoples, local organizations, etc. However, distortion was far and away the most frequent problem raised. Yet, the fact that this issue has been so fully considered in Québec in recent years, the evidence itself of the problem, and the complexity of the solutions, have resulted in a situation where several participants mentioned the distortions and their injustice without discussing them further.

Distortions

Several participants commenting on the distortion issue stated that they found it far from normal that in many cases, a majority of voters are not represented in the Assembly by the elected representatives of their choice. In this regard, the 1966 and 1973 election results were most often cited as examples of the effects of over-representation and under-representation that a voting method may lead to. In 1973, the Liberal Party benefited from a 38% over-representation, while the Parti Québécois was under-represented by 24.7%. An average under-representation of 15.4% and an average over-representation of 21.7% can be noted for all elections in Québec from 1936-1976.

Participants also considered unacceptable that the voting method would permit a political party to gain power by obtaining the support of a lesser number of voters than the party relegated to the opposition benches. It is in this sense that the legitimacy of governments has been questioned. If the elected party is chosen by a minority of voters, it is doubtful that it could effectively act as the spokesman and defender of all citizens; its representative function is thereby greatly handicapped.

Whatever the voting method chosen in the event of reform, all opinions confirm that it should reduce distortion and ensure a greater equity between the number of votes received and the number of seats obtained by a party. According to many, the introduction of any element whatsoever of proportionality would permit a fairer representation in the National Assembly. Finally, some participants declared that they could put up with distortion inasmuch as the rotation of parties in power acts as a countervailing force and to the extent that the opposition, like the government, has the chance for the system to work in its favour during the next elections.

Representation of ideologies

Another dimension of representation was stressed during the consultation: the need for the voting method to allow not only a mathematically more equitable representation, but a representation that mirrors the pluralistic nature of Québec society and gives different groups a chance of being represented.

On this theme, most opinions centred around representation of ideologies. All or almost all participants agree that they stand for a voting method that would allow for the emergence of new political parties in the National Assembly. A voting method should, to be truly democratic and to restore the confidence of the population, ensure representation of third parties. Today's society can no longer allow itself to be reduced to a feud between two opposing factors. Our society is a vehicle for a wide range of collective lifestyles. Values are not always the same for all citizens.

The voting method must be reconciled with the recognition of a pluralistic society. The concept of equality covers more than a single reality for people. It means both ensuring the expression of different trends of thought, promoting the existence of a strong and well-organized opposition, and enabling the formation of small political parties. Within this perspective, several participants favoured a system within which the opposition would have a new rôle to play by permitting the representation of all active political backgrounds and forces, thereby creating a new democratic vitality. Finally, several participants were adamant that the mechanisms connected with a reform of the electoral system not prevent the growth of new parties by assigning, in order to maintain objectives of stability, too high of a premium to the winning party.

Representation of groups

Representation of groups was widely discussed. In the context of this extensive theme, representation of women was not only touched upon by several participants, but united all opinions.

A society such as ours cannot leave to chance the representation of more than half its population. This observation flowed from all these opinions. Although women actually comprise 52% of the electorate, they are under-represented in the National Assembly with only 6% of the members. Moreover, the under- representation of women is not restricted to the National Assembly. The same situation permeates all organizations and decision-making centres. The reasons for this state of events are numerous and can be found on all levels of society. Nonetheless, in recent years, women have slowly acceded to elected office, especially in municipalities and school commissions. However, the progression is so slow that at the current pace, it will take some 800 years before women are proportionally represented.

A number of participants were aware of this situation and in the context of possible electoral reform, they suggested ways to improve representation of women. These steps, however, were not unanimously agreed to. Nonetheless, most agreed that the selection of candidates and the addition of their names to the lists (including the order in which their names were listed) was the most likely operation to allow women to be elected in multi-member polls. If an open list voting method is selected and the voter is able to make a choice, it is believed that women's chances would be greatly improved. Running of teams of candidates in multi-member electoral divisions would also permit more women to be elected. Finally, several participants even suggested regulating the parties and requiring them to include women on their lists.

Some participants demanded representation of ethnic and linguistic minorities. In addition to the Grand Council of Crees that stood for a specific form of representation to reinforce the political power of the Cree, Naskapee and Inuit native peoples, the other participants who demanded special representation for native peoples considered above all the rights and privileges acquired by these peoples and the specific nature of their claims. Since the introduction of a proportional system would not favourably improve representation of native peoples (owing to their sparse regional concentration), it was suggested that these voters choose their representative according to the majority polling method in a special and exceptional electoral division.

Representation of other cultural and linguistic communities was discussed in the same context, but no special measures were requested for representation of these groups. The argument most often raised was that the single-member voting method has, until now, favoured the election of representatives from minority groups, owing to the concentration of certain ethnic communities, and that any new system should give these groups as good, if not better, chances of representation. Some insisted that measures should be taken so that the introduction of list voting in multi-member divisions would not harm the presence of minority elements within the large political parties sitting in the National Assembly.

Although to a much lesser extent, representation of youth in the National Assembly was also called for. According to the statements of some participants, Québec society has until now limited the participation of youth in democratic life to the right to vote. Very few young people have been able to run for election or be elected up to now. It was stated that the political parties have the responsibility of ensuring the presence of young people in their midst. Youth demands that the right of representation apply to age groups to allow representatives from all generations to sit in the National Assembly. A change or a regulation of the policies prevailing in the choice of candidates by political parties was even suggested.

2.2 TERRITORIAL DEMARCATION

2.2.1 Status

The electoral map or the boundaries of electoral divisions do not alone influence the voting method. The electoral map results from the voting method selected and varies as a function of the latter. While a single-member system requires the creation of as many divisions as there are seats up for election, a multi-member system reduces the number of divisions and ultimately could consider the entire country as one single electoral unit.

Conversely, the electoral map may affect election results. Although the extent of this influence may be difficult to measure, certain criteria used in determining the boundaries, such as the socio-economic homogeneity of a region or the number of voters per division, may have an impact on election results. From this angle, a relationship between the voting method, certain electoral results, and the divisional map can be established.

A democratic electoral system is generally based on the premise that each vote should have the same political weight. However, in addition to the member/number of voters coefficient, a large number of geographical, economic and other constraints normally enter into play in drawing the boundaries of electoral divisions.

Mapping may significantly vary from one unit to another, whatever the voting method. As a reminder of this, the number of voters per division in Québec presently fluctuates between more or less twenty-five percent (25%) on either side of a fixed average of 36 000 voters.

For political or practical reasons, it may be advisable to favour the political weight of certain voters by establishing in certain divisions a member/number of voters coefficient more advantageous to certain trends. The grouping of ethnic or linguistic minorities or socio-economically homogeneous groups may also impact upon the election results to the extent that the population thereby defined votes in block for the same political party. Several studies have shown that a strong tendency to support a single political party is present among linguistic minorities that are territorially, and therefore electorally, concentrated. However, it is less possible to circumscribe relatively homogeneous groups in larger divisions.

The Québec electoral map has undergone a number of changes over the course of its history. Mathematics prevailed for a long time over any other consideration for electoral mapping purposes, and the first approaches at reform sought to standardize the member/number of voters coefficient in each of the divisions. The concern for homogeneity of divisions surfaced much later with the introduction of socio-economic criteria in electoral mapping. Nevertheless, one aspect of the map has remained a constant factor throughout all these changes: the prominence of the small, single-member division since the beginning of the century. Consequently, the possibility of mapping large multi-member divisions (several members for each) has given rise to an enormous response from Québecers who expressed their opinions to the Commission de la représentation électorale.

2.2.2 Report on the opinions of participants

An analysis of the opinions discloses that participants emphasized three aspects of territorial mapping. Firstly, there was much discussion on the criteria for establishing electoral divisions and on the concept of a natural region.

The possible consequences of regionalization of a territory and the probable political weight of regions were also widely debated. On the other hand, given a possible remaking of the electoral map, the population insisted on reconciling the boundaries of electoral divisions with other existing boundaries.

Demarcation of divisions

Many participants before the Commission de la représentation listed the criteria that, in their opinion, should be considered in the demarcation of electoral divisions. Natural boundaries, zones of influence, area, density, socio-economic homogeneity and even the road system, illustrate the diversity of factors mentioned as possible operating criteria. For populations in outlying regions, an isolation factor was also considered.

Other more subjective mapping parameters were suggested: the feeling of belonging was first among such proposals. Citizens rate highly the demarcation of a division to correspond with an environment in which they feel at ease and where the popular will can be expressed. Certain individuals even made this feeling of belonging their only criterion for territorial division. Some stressed the existence of special interests and demand divisions that reflect a special status given to certain groups. Thus, a proposed division for native peoples or even for the fishermen of the Gaspé region was proposed, sometimes using the Iles-de-la-Madeleine as an example, a division that currently has special status.

A number of participants endeavoured to define what is meant by natural regions. A single principle rallied most of their opinions, that is to say, identification: a region corresponds to the people who reside there; it is identifiable by reason of its institutions or its social and cultural organizations.

However, when confronted with the problem of more concrete demarcation of regions or the problem of an accurate description of regional boundaries, participants, with only a few exceptions, could not reach a consensus. In outlying and less urbanized regions, isolation and distance between pockets of the population obviously facilitate regional perception and concrete demarcation of a region. Certain major economic or socio-cultural factors also help characterize these regions. The only regions that clearly stand out in this manner are Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, the North Shore and the Gaspé.

The population does not deny the existence of regions. A number of opinions indicate that this is so, even in highly urbanized environments. What is, however, different is that the perception of a region becomes more vague and its boundaries more difficult to determine in urban settings. The range of attachments, contacts and regional relationships result in a situation where few are able to agree on precise demarcation.

Political weight of regions

Just as there is disagreement on the definition of regions, no unanimous approach exists with respect to the political weight that should be given to such regions. Although most participants favoured decentralizing powers to the regions, several participants argued that regional recognition should not obstruct the position of Montréal or Québec as driving forces within the Québec community. Consequently, province-wide guidelines of socio-economic development must place major urban centres in the forefront. More numerous were supporters of a policy that would allow recognition of regional realities and would facilitate not only collective action but decision-making on this level. To ensure that regional representativeness is not mere myth, regions must have a real political rôle, they must be the masters of their economic planning; they must have powers of control. Some stated that the only way to stabilize their populations and ensure the resource development of an environment by residents of that environment is to ensure strong regional representation in the National Assembly.

Many participants insisted that regional representation be quality representation: good members or good teams of members. Several individuals added that any new electoral system, while ensuring a better qualitative representation, should not decrease the number of members to which these regions are presently entitled. This is a constant concern: no one wants to risk losing representatives in the National Assembly. It was stated that the decrease in the number of members would create a greater imbalance between the influence of major urban centres and the influence of outlying regions. A number of participants insisted that a new polling system should not in any way disadvantage regions that are not densely populated when compared with urbanized regions. On the other hand, several participants stressed that the political rights of "city dwellers" stand on the same footing as the rights of other citizens, and that demographic density does not constitute a valid reason to chip away at these rights.

Harmonizing electoral divisions and other territorial divisions

Most participants are in favor of an electoral map that is in keeping with other territorial divisions. Citizens can choose from an impressive number of territorial zones in Québec (municipalities, regional county municipalities, administrative regions, judicial districts, school commissions, dioceses, etc.) to which they often have difficulty in relating.

Among all units suggested for adoption, regional county municipalities are preferred. Proposals have been made with a view to either using them in their present state as electoral regions or grouping them to form divisions that are more representative of the environment. The arguments most often made for adoption of regional county municipalities hold that these already established administrative units respect a certain feeling of belonging, and that they promote the ongoing process of decentralizing powers toward the regions. Participants suggested that municipalities should be grouped in the Québec and Montréal Urban Communities and in the Ottawa Valley Regional Community.

While some individuals proposed the boundaries of administrative regions, others proposed a grouping of present-day divisions. Other territorial divisions were rarely suggested for adoption.

Participants especially insisted that the demarcation of new electoral divisions consider already existing realities so as not to hamper the efficiency of decisions taken on various levels. Some indicated that over and above the credibility tied to the neutrality of electoral mapping, it is essential to make each of these divisions a social unit that is well integrated with the economic structure and development guidelines particular to each territory. In this way, the creation of electoral units out of kilter with traditional administrative zones and socio-economic imperatives can be avoided.

2.3 ROLE OF THE MEMBER AND PARLIAMENTARY LIFE

2.3.1 Status

Whenever voting methods are discussed, we think of the representatives who are elected by this mechanism. In our unicameral parliamentary system, these representatives are the members. It is election on a universal suffrage basis that backs up the legitimacy of our democratic system. This legitimacy is called into question when inequalities in representation allow the elected representatives of a single party or of a coalition of parties to exercise power without the support of a majority of the electorate. Such a state of events can sap the legitimate standing of all institutions and hamper the efforts of the elected representatives.

The duties of members are multi-faceted. They act as representatives of the voters of a division, as intermediaries or ombudsmen, as legislators, as watchdogs over the government and the administration. Originally, the parliamentary rôle of the member was paramount; the elected representatives were the natural spokesmen for Québec in the Legislative Assembly, informing the government of the desires, concerns and opinions of the public and informing the public of the intentions of the government.

Development of the parliamentary system has progressively given primacy to the executive (the cabinet) over the legislature, and deprived members of a large part of their rightful prerogative as legislators and regulators. This feature of present-day parliamentary life is experienced to a greater or lesser degree in the various countries studied, whatever their polling method.

This parliamentary evolution in Québec has encouraged members to prioritize their rôle as representatives, intermediaries or information agents, since they consider that in this way they usefully serve the voters. Several members acknowledge this state of fact and numerous studies and analyses have so disclosed over the past twenty years.

The rôle of the member, more specifically in Québec, is now focused around the electorate/elected relationship (work in the "riding") and parliamentary life (work in the National Assembly). When a poll on the rôle of members was taken in 1978, more than 40% of respondents appeared satisfied with their member's work, and considered that work in the riding and in the National Assembly were equally important. A 1983 poll by the Commission de la représentation électorale disclosed that more than half of the respondents gave a high rating to the member's rôle as a representative and compared this rôle to the work of "professionals".

Electorate/elected relationship

Whether they are members of the government or the opposition, whether they represent urban, rural or semi-rural electoral divisions, members generally consider that they are more useful and productive when working with the electorate. However, this feeling is different for members appointed to the Cabinet upon whom legislative initiative and executive responsibilities fall. Yet, cabinet members cannot neglect their duty to serve their electorate. Whether rightly or wrongly, the quality and efficiency of the electorate/elected relationship relates to the re-election of a member in his division, whether he is a member of the Cabinet or not.

The real rôle of a member is most often defined as supplying goods and services, rather than expressing opinions and ideas. He provides information and acts as an intermediary between the administration and the electorate (individuals or groups). This task is facilitated and even institutionalized by the presence of a riding office in each electoral division. A member's work is a function of whether he comes from Montréal or Québec (urban) or the Gaspé or Abitibi (outlying regions), or whether he is on the government or opposition benches.

The nature of his business and his public is related to the socio-economic, geographic and demographic features of each division. Outlying regions generate greater concern for the primary and secondary sectors (agriculture, forestry, etc.), whereas in the urban context and especially in Montréal, more attention is paid to the secondary and tertiary sectors (housing, services, etc.). In outlying regions, the size of the divisions forces the member to travel more often. Additionally, voters residing at a distance from the major centres do not always benefit from the proximity of governmental services to the same extent as voters in urban areas; they therefore call upon their member more often.

Dealings with municipalities and intermediate bodies constitute an important component of the member's work. In outlying regions, a single member may deal with a large number of municipalities and traditional organizations for which he acts as a middleman in dealings with the government and administration. However, in Montréal and in urban environments, several members will have a single mayor, a single urban community or a single chamber of commerce and they may deal directly with the government without going through the members.

Additionally, the member often disregards the party affiliation of his voters and considers that he represents the entire population. On the other hand, the voter, who may disagree with the political colour of his member, sometimes prefers to contact a member of another division.

The present electoral system influences, to a certain point, the way in which relationships between voters and members are interwoven. In this respect it seems that the single-member character of divisions and the demarcation of the electoral map are both decisive factors. In fact, the single-member character makes the member solely responsible for his relationship with his voters during his term of office; some issues and problems for solution often concern and also straddle a number of administrative divisions that are different from divisions on the electoral map. In recent years, this has resulted in the creation of regional caucuses.

Parliamentary life

The duties of lawmaker and government watchdog are not extensive for backbenchers, since both the rigid application of the principles of ministerial responsibility and the party line generally force them to unconditionally support the government in all votes in the National Assembly. Additionally, the dynamics of confrontation between the parties and the operating rules of the National Assembly, although they permit opposition members to oversee the administration, do not give them the chance to actively participate in the lawmaking process. Accordingly, it is rather within the caucus and the political parties themselves that members are free to put forward their opinions and endeavour to orient the decision-making process.

The rôle of the member therefore depends on parliamentary attitudes, customs and rules. Does the electoral system influence this parliamentary life? It should be noted that the very existence of parliamentary government is not tied to any specific electoral system since parliamentary systems are in place in countries using proportional representation, the majority vote or a mixed system.

On the other hand, the operating rules of the National Assembly certainly influence the member's role more decisively than does the electoral system.

Furthermore, it should be remembered that since the end of the 1960s, all legislatures that have undertaken to study methods of improving the member's rôle have always proposed parliamentary and not electoral reform. It should also be emphasized that the very idea of reasserting the value of his rôle bears exclusively upon the parliamentary aspect of his work. This confirms that the electorate has judged more satisfactory his rôle as an intermediary. Parliamentary reform is currently underway. The objectives of this reform are targeted at modernizing the operation of the Assembly and its committees, providing a better control over the executive and the public administration, as well as ensuring better supervision of public finances and expenditures. It is desired that this reform be on-going. Members of the legislature are now studying the possibility of limiting the application of the principle of ministerial responsibility to essential issues.

Even though the voting system alone cannot be considered as the overriding factor affecting the rôle of the elected representative or the operation of the National Assembly, it should not be forgotten that it nonetheless determines the composition of the Assembly. In this connection, the voting system contributes extensively to the formation of parliamentary majorities or minorities. It is in this way that the voting system intervenes in parliamentary life; its influence is not negligible. In fact, at present, strong parliamentary majorities allow Québec members to devote more time to work in their division, given the small say they have in the National Assembly. It is therefore governmental stability, rather than the rôle of a member, that affects the interrelationships between the voting system and the parliamentary system. The issue of governmental stability is studied below.

2.3.2 Report on the opinions of participants

Opinions made to the Commission de la représentation électorale on the subject of the member's rôle and on parliamentary life can be classified under two major headings: the perception of the current rôle of the member and the impact of reform of the voting system on this rôle. An analysis of these representations confirms the greater weight given to the electorate/elected relationship than to the parliamentary work of members.

Perception of the member's rôle

Electorate/elected relationship

The most concerned individuals, the members themselves, as well as the groups and citizens who testified before the Commission, all agree on confirming the importance of the relationship between the elected representative and his electorate. When referring to the members, they use the following terms: ombudsman, representative, preferred intermediary, defender of interests, lobbyist, spokesman, information agent, etc. Members give high priority to this aspect of their work.

The members stated differences between working in a rural environment and working in an urban environment. Among other topics, they noted the importance of relationships with municipalities in a rural environment as well as the great diversity of issues, the heavy workload imposed by travelling, and the type of relations with the electorate. In fact, distance from major centres and governmental services entails greater requests for services from members covering outlying territories. Similarly, identification with a member is stronger outside large cities.

Citizens give great importance to having access to a member and they often link this access to the single-member character of the divisions. Some participants found that the current single-member division boundaries prevent members from dealing with important issues concerning a number of divisions. According to these participants, cabinet ministers have the responsibility for dealing with these wide-ranging issues and this contributes to diminishing the value of the member's role. There is no univeral agreement on this subject, since certain participants consider that the possibility for cooperation between members of adjacent divisions is sufficient.

Very little reference is made to the work of a member within his party. If referred to specifically, it was to set off a contradiction between the member representing the population and the member representing a party.

Parliamentary life

All agree on the parliamentary rôle of the elected representative--members, groups, political parties and citizens note that a member cannot actually accomplish truly legislative work, and this is especially so where he sits on the government backbenches. The existence of a too strong influence of the executive on the legislative branch is regrettable, as is the rigid application of the party line, the practice of delegating legislation, etc. The terms used to describe the member's position in the National Assembly are evocative: members are described as "having their hands tied" and "neutralized", or are compared to a "voting machine."

Impact of a voting system reform

Electorate/elected relationship

Two essential concerns underlie opinions on the impact of a voting system reform on the rôle of elected representatives: firstly, the importance of safeguarding the preferred relationship between the electorate and their elected representatives and secondly, the need for improving the rôle of the member by making him the political spokesman for a more extensive territory.

The single-member or multi-member character of divisions is often discussed on this point. Some believe that access to members as ensured by a single-member division is the ideal situation.

However, for some, the multi-member division allows for more efficient teamwork and extensive action throughout a territory, while others maintain that a multi-member division increases the risk of sterile competition between members of the same party and between different parties over the same territory. A single question is repeatedly asked: Does the multi-member division allow subregions to have their say?

Some members, as well as participants, believe that relationships between the electorate and their elected representatives would be modified in multi-member divisions, but that they could be maintained.

Finally, a number of participants fear that a reform introducing a mixed voting system would entail the creation of two types of members.

Parliamentary life

The voting system does not impact upon the parliamentary rôle of a member. Strictly speaking, a parliamentary reform, not a reform of the voting system, is required to reassert the value of the member's rôle. This is the essence of the opinions gathered during the consultation. Some participants prefer a combination of these two reforms to guarantee an improved rôle for members in the National Assembly. Finally, the subject of the overall impact of the new voting system on the political system was discussed. It is hoped that all such related questions will be subject to more detailed study in the future.

2.4 GOVERNMENTAL STABILITY

2.4.1 Status

When defining governmental stability, it is first essential to relate it to two other concepts: continuity and efficiency. In fact, governmental stability is better illustrated by studying its effects on government action than by any other abstract or remote consideration of political realities. The ability for a government to carry through its political, economic and social projects seems conditioned by the existence of some permanency in power. Similarly, any judgment made of the efficiency of a government is directly tied to the projects that it not only has implemented but also completed.

Numerous studies have shown that every political environment influences governmental stability and that governmental stability is closely related to the entire political system and to the different components of democratic life. The mentality and cultural characteristics of a people, the electoral law, parliamentary life and party organizations are only some of these variables. What influence, therefore, does the voting method have on governmental stability?

A voting system can be defined as a body of rules that determines the manner of designating members. Yet the voting system only acts indirectly on governmental stability. However, if the different formulae under which votes are converted into seats are included in a voting system, then this system affects, more or less acutely, the formation of a governmental majority, whether by a single party or by a coalition of parties. Certain mechanics by which the voting method has an impact on the composition of majority governments can be identified. This majority would seem to be tied in with stability through the effects of continuity and efficiency that it can generate.

Although the allotment of seats in a proportional system is related to the proportion of votes obtained by each party, the allotment in a majority system is based on an observed majority. Consequently, the majority system has generally tended to favour the two-party system and produce strong parliamentary majorities, while a proportional system may favour multi-party systems and force the leading party to concede advantages to smaller parties that, in return, support it to constitute a parliamentary majority.

From the beginning of its parliamentary system, Québec has always elected its representatives under a majority voting system. Our society is therefore unaccustomed to coalition governments and the almost absolute assurance that an election will result in a parliamentary majority of a single party constitutes an important part of our electoral tradition. Many Québecers told the Commision that they attach importance to this question.

2.4.2 Report on the opinions of participants

In contrast to the frequent participation on certain other issues, governmental stability was treated a little less often. This is undoubtedly explained by the intricate complexity of the subject and owing to some ambiguity in its definition and in its vocabulary. Participants addressed themselves just as often to governmental and political stability as to parliamentary and institutional stability. An analysis of the opinions made on this theme discloses two major trends.

The first trend relates to the importance attached to a party obtaining a strong majority that ensures efficiency of governmental action. Many participants stress the necessity of forming a government capable of acting and being efficient, even in times of crisis. The perspective of a change to the voting system prompted some to believe that there is a greater risk of weaker governments without any strong political direction. Others believe that only a majority government can guarantee good parliamentary work. In this respect, the beneficial effects of a two-party system were stressed in contrast to the proliferation of small parties entailing unending negotiations and monumental instability. The tradition of governmental stability is directly connected to the parliamentary majority of a party; this should be continued to ensure efficiency of the government, at the expense, perhaps, of some freedom of expression.

The second trend of opinions rejected this choice of stability at any price and the possibilty of a political party assuming all powers and all rights to itself during its mandate. In this case, the concept of stability relates as much to the concept of representativeness as to that of efficiency. More reference is made to a government representing social diversity and issues than to a stable government.

The idea has been advanced that governmental stability only guarantees efficiency to the extent that it provides for real solutions to problems. Yet, a representative parliamentary assembly would offer a greater guarantee of efficiency than a government that is only marginally representative of its base in society. It was mentioned that the presence of a majority government is only beneficial if this majority is really a majority and not the artificial fruit of distortions under the voting method.

In this context, a multi-party system was suggested as offering the best chances of resulting in a fairer portrait of society. It was preferred to any artificial two-party system that would produce the illusion of permanent social stability.

We are said to be ready to accept a certain type of instability where this instability reflects the composition of our society and allows for power-sharing to account for the full expression of divergent positions.

Finally, we should mention that certain participants straddle the two trends and followed the path of compromise. They recognize the importance of a certain form of stability, but they do not consider it as an absolute; they suggest a voting method that would facilitate the expression of new ideas, without however requiring perfect representation. They insist on preserving participatory democracy and see it as a guarantee of the efficiency of governments.

2.5 ROLE OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES

2.5.1 Status

Political parties are the tools of collective action; their objective is to elect representatives and to determine the conditions of political life. They are certainly the group most concerned by electoral law and the voting system--the mechanics that they must come to terms with. It can be asked to what point the voting system influences the behaviour of the political parties or even, on another level, whether it determines the nature itself of the party system.

A brief review of party systems of a number of Western countries discloses that two-party situations are found not only in majority electoral systems, but also in proportional or mixed systems. Similarly, a multi-party system can exist under majority systems. It has also been shown that in a number of cases where a country has replaced a one-ballot, sigle-member majority system by proportional representation, a multi-party system preceded this change. The experts agree, therefore, that it is difficult to suggest that the voting method alone determines the party system. Numerous other factors have been identified that have no links to the voting system: the greater or lesser heterogeneous nature of the electorate, electoral legislation, the number of members or the size of the assembly, apart from any socio-economic, historical or religious factors characteristic of each country.

A comparative analysis of all these and other variables (such as the social nature of the party's public, the features of its organization, its ideological foundation, its operations) would allow a more complete picture of political parties and of their relationship with the other components of the overall political system in Québec and in other countries.

The Commission has chosen to discuss one aspect of the rôle of political parties, that is to say the influence of the voting method on certain electoral activities. The consultation across Québec did not give rise to a debate on the party system nor on the rôle of political parties from an electoral system standpoint.

In Québec, political parties have naturally adapted their structures to the characteristics of a one-ballot, single-member voting system to such an extent that the practical responsibilities of the parties most affected by the introduction of a new voting system would touch upon their internal organization. In this way, the organization of the two large parties now present in the National Assembly must have ramifications throughout each of the existing 122 electoral divisions. Delegates to different party offices or party conferences come in general from these 122 constituencies. Party members and party organizers choose a candidate for each of these divisions, etc.

2.5.2 Report on the opinions of participants

Few participants expressed opinions on the importance of political parties and their responsibilities. When they did so, the issue was principally discussed from the viewpoint of the selection of candidates and of the compilation of lists (on the premise that a list system would be adopted). How much autonomy should the political parties have; should the state intervene to protect the choice of the voter and the chances for all political backgrounds to be represented in each party; should an open or blocked list be introduced?

We believe that a reform in the electoral system will first change the way of choosing candidates. With multi-member divisions and a list vote, there will no longer be a single candidate, but several candidates from whom to choose and no longer a single candidate, but a group of candidates for whom to vote in the same territory.

Certain people believe that this would necessitate impossible teamwork because candidates of the same party would run against each other and the party would not be able to support all. Others fear that only candidates coming from more populous regions of a division will take the limelight and will more easily be placed on the list. How can outlying regions be represented? Similarly, can women or young people be guaranteed a place on the list. These questions result in opposing views. On the one hand, the full autonomy of party organizations should be preserved, since the democratic life and organization of political parties belong to their members who, it is believed, will consider it a moral obligation to resolve these problems. The state should not, therefore, intervene in the compilation of blocked lists. Supporters of the blocked list propose a greater participation of voters in political parties. It is in this way that the voters can influence the choice of candidates while respecting the autonomy of parties.

On the other hand, certain participants were anxious to prevent the increasing importance of the rôle of party organizations and believe that party members must choose the candidates, although others clearly favour voters choosing candidates. Both sides expressed their approval of an open list. In addition, they ask for regulation to ensure that names of women, young people and subregional representatives are on the list.

A greater number of individuals supported the principle of the open list in contrast to the blocked list. They believe that the open list presents the following advantages: it allows the voter a free choice between the man and the party, it gives a greater autonomy to the voter and resolves the dilemma that has often been observed in voting that requires the voter to choose between a candidate or a party. An open list, on the other hand, has the disadvantage of handing over control of the heads of lists to party hotshots, given their experience.

Representatives from the two largest political parties of Québec who came to testify before the Commission de la représentation électorale stated that an open list would bring about internal bickering and would increase the cost of elections.

Supporters of a blocked list see the following advantages: the list is simple and easy to understand, it requires a single mark when voting, and people can vote for a predetermined team.

Participants also believe that a new voting method must respect independent candidacies: independent candidates must be treated in the same way as political parties. Some technical suggestions have been made such as the possibility of attributing the remaining votes given to an independent candidate to the party of his choice on the condition that this choice is determined before the elections, or the possibility of several independent candidates presenting themselves as a team on the same slate.

CHAPTER 3

THE PRESENT ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND PROPOSED FORMULAS

3.1 PRESENT ELECTORAL SYSTEM

3.1.1 One-ballot, single-member majority voting

Elections in Québec are currently held under the one-ballot, single-member majority voting system. This system is defined as "majority" because a candidate is elected by a relative majority, that is to say, whenever the number of votes he obtains is greater than the number of votes obtained by each of his opponents, even if it is less than the total number of votes cast for other candidates. It is a "single-member" vote because a single member is elected for each division. It is "one-ballot" because the electorate votes but once.

The majority voting system has been a part of our electoral traditions for almost two centuries. Originally, after the proclamation of the Act of 1791, there were both multi-member divisions of two or three members in the most densely populated counties and single-member divisions in counties where the number of inhabitants did not justify multiple representation. Voting was entirely similar to the British system.

Our electoral system has been modified over the years: the number of divisions and seats has almost constantly increased, following relatively closely the growth of the Québec population. Divisions have become entirely single-member. The system has changed from an open vote to a secret vote, and women have been given the right to vote.

More recently, the electoral map has been the subject of review and has been changed to ensure fair representation: better city-country balance, abolition of protected counties, and imposition of limits on the variation of the number of voters per division. Some even believed that the improvement of the electoral map would itself be sufficient to soften the effects of the distortions existing between the distribution of votes and the distribution of seats in the National Assembly.

However, these distortions arise, to a much larger extent, from the electoral system rather than from the electoral map. In fact, one of the most important

features of our present voting system is to allow a clear and rapid choice of government by giving political parties a number of seats in the Assembly that almost never corresponds to the number of votes obtained.

The most striking and oft' quoted examples are the results of the 1944, 1966 and 1973 elections. In 1944, the Union Nationale Party obtained 52.7% of the seats with 35.8% of the votes, while the Québec Liberal Party obtained 40.7% of the seats with 39.5% of the votes. In 1966, the Union Nationale obtained 51.9% of the seats with 40.8% of the votes, while the Liberals obtained 46.3% of the seats with 47.3% of the votes. In both cases, a party obtained a majority of seats with a minority of votes. Moreover, in 1973, although the revised electoral map was in force, the following were the results: the Québec Liberal Party formed a goverment with 92.7% of the seats and 54.7% of the votes while the Parti Québécois formed the official opposition with 5.5% of the seats and 30.2% of the votes. It is therefore difficult to hold the electoral map solely responsible for these distortions.

3.1.2 Report on the opinions of participants

The various briefs and opinions received by the Commission de la représentation électorale in connection with the present electoral system set out its advantages and disadvantages. It should be noted that some of the themes discussed appear both as advantages and disadvantages depending upon the nature of the participants' positions.

Advantages

Simplicity

The simplicity of one-ballot, single-member majority voting is often cited as its unassailable advantage. The ease with which the voter can cast his ballot and understand the steps involved in the electoral process, the simple addition of the votes cast in favour of each of the candidates, the swiftness of compiling the returns the very evening of the general elections, the clear relationship between a riding and its member, are some of the items that participants proposed during the hearings as indicative of this simplicity.

In other words, the present voting system is easy for the voters to understand and easy to administer. It is perhaps for this reason that a rate of voter turnout has been observed under the present system that compares favourably with other provinces in Canada and other countries. Québecers vote in large number at time of general elections and for about the last ten years, the turnout has always exceeded 80% of registered voters.

The electorate/elected relationship--a preferred link

A unique link exists between the member and his voters on account of the single-member nature of electoral divisions. The member may define himself as a power line between the state and its citizens, a go-between or an ombudsman, a rôle that is moreover clearly preferred by all participants. In principle, the member represents all voters regardless of party affiliations.

Homogeneous divisions

While restricting their number, it has been possible until now to establish divisions that are small enough to respect demographic, socio-economic and geographic homogeneity. This has also allowed each division to have its own structure and for voters to relate to their division and to their member. Traditionally, "the riding" was used as a point of reference.

Stable and efficient governments

The present electoral system almost certainly guarantees the presence of a strong parliamentary majority. In this way, the voter chooses directly the team that will form the government. This stands out as one of the most salient advantages for supporters of the status quo in the electoral system. For these individuals, stability is defined as a function of the numerical size of the majority and this majority guarantees governmental efficiency.

Representative political parties

One of the objectives of an electoral system is to ensure representation of all trends in society. The present electoral system indirectly attains this objective by encouraging voters who take lively interest in political matters to join together under the umbrella of large parties that are therefore obliged to extend their base. Consequently, the political parties ensure a good cross-section of the elected representatives.

For example, certain minority ethnic groups, such as the Jews and the Italians, whose spokesmen came to speak before the Commission de la représentation électorale, consider that the present voting system allows them to be represented within the structure of the major parties without being confined to identified ghettos. In fact, members coming from their community at the same time represent as much their ethnic group as other voters, without distinction.

These five themes synthesize the most prominent advantages of the present electoral system. Participants also stressed the advantages of having the same voting system on the different federal, provincial, municipal and school government levels.

Disadvantages

Unrepresentative members

Many participants cast doubt on whether a member can be representative of all voters: how can a Liberal voter relate to a "Péquiste" member or vice versa? In reply to this question, other participants stated that many voters feel obliged to call upon members elected in other divisions whose party affiliations are the same as their own. Sometimes, in regions where there is a high concentration of members belonging to a single party, traveling may be rather extensive.

Participants also lamented that a member's field of action is restricted to a "riding" and, therefore, to local interests, whereas he should be able to more easily develop political action for both inter- and intra-regional matters.

Anachronistic electoral divisions

Some believe that identification with the traditional riding is a myth and that, except rarely, this identification is inexistent and surfaces only at the time of elections. This is especially so in urban areas where the demarcation of divisions does not correspond to any cultural, social, economic or geographic reality. In fact, using Montréal as an example, a citizen might live on one side of the street and belong to division "A" while his neighbour across the way is registered in division "B". Participants believe that the "riding" is an anachronism and that it is no longer in keeping with present realities.

Poor representation and distortion

These are the major disadvantages of the present electoral system. Participants who raised this criticism consider the objective of a voting system to be the formation of a National Assembly that accurately represents all political trends in society. Our present system does not encourage the emergence of third parties and the expression of other ideologies. Additionally, it restricts the participation of women in political life because one person only can be nominated as a candidate by each political party in any one division and because political parties feel compelled to run a "common denominator" candidate who is in keeping with traditional local figures. Women rarely reflect this portrait.

Certain minorities, such as the Cree, the Naskapee and the Inuit, are also not represented under the present system; they demand the creation of special divisions to cure this situation.

The well-documented distortions between the number of votes and the number of seats obtained by a party are unacceptable and are not in keeping with the democratic character of our political system. Some participants said that these

distortions cloud the lawful standing of our governments. Participants based their remarks on past electoral results that they cited as examples to support their criticism.

Excessive majorities

Governmental stability was most often cited as an advantage of the present voting system. However, some individuals do not assign to it the same significance and consider it as a disadvantage. For them, stability is not guaranteed only by a parliamentary majority, no matter how impressive this majority might be. Social stability is just as important as political stability. They believe, on the other hand, that weaker parliamentary majorities might have undeniable advantages: a more efficient effort to reach agreement, a new rôle for the member as a legislator and as a watchdog, etc. Moreover, these participants state that governmental stability based on a strong parliamentary majority as guaranteed under our present system, jams fair representation of all trends.

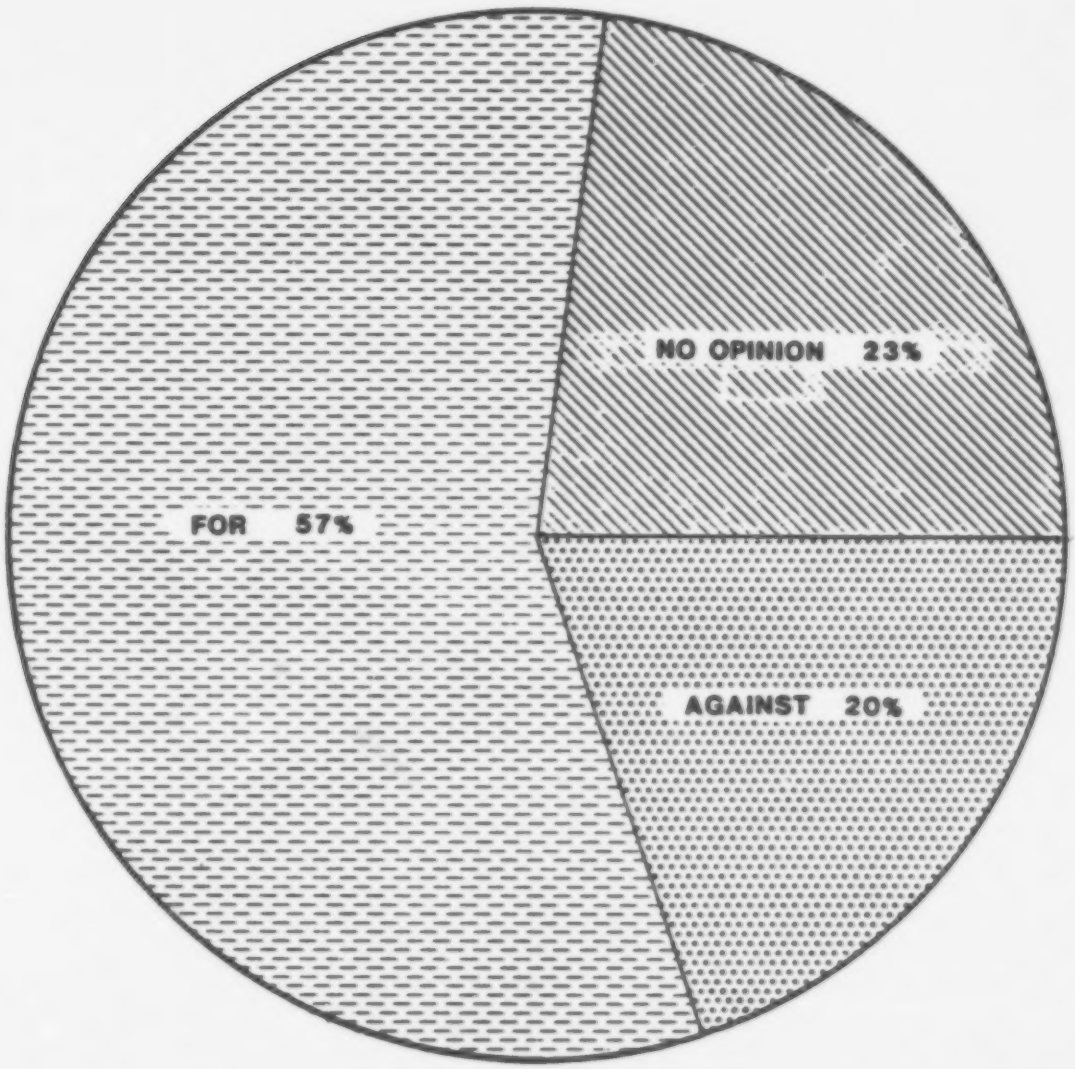
3.1.3 Need for reform

Members of the National Assembly, organizations and citizens who put their point across before the Commission de la représentation were in favour of reform: 57% of the participants consider that reform is necessary, while 20% prefer maintaining the present electoral system, as illustrated in Pie Chart I. If the undecided are not taken into account, that is to say, individuals who did not take a position on the need for reform, the pro-reform percentage increases to 74%.

It goes without saying that the arguments made in support of these positions more often clearly singled out the disadvantages of the present electoral system than its advantages. The search for fair representation (representation of ideologies, women, minorities and the elimination of distortions) clearly came out as the basic argument in support of a reform proposal.

PIE CHART 1

PARTICIPANTS' OPINIONS
ON THE NEED FOR ELECTORAL REFORM



Among individuals wanting to change our voting system, some also noted the urgency of such reform and stated that this reform should take place before the next elections or as soon as feasible. They recalled to mind that reform has been discussed for a long time without concrete results.

3.2 Proposed formulas

During the hearings that the Commission de la représentation électorale held throughout Québec, many participants came to express their opinions on the electoral system and on future reform. They often indicated a choice. An examination of all voting operations and formulas resulting in grouping the proposals under one of three major electoral systems. Table II sets out the precise names of the different electoral systems proposed. Graphic II indicates the preference for each electoral system by participants in favour of reform.

It is impossible to set out in detail the large number of suggestions made. The structure and guiding principles of these proposals must be respected because of their innovative features. They demonstate that it is possible, by reconciling certain variables, to pave the way for reform while respecting the democratic character and features of a country in the choice of its electoral system.

3.2.1 Majority systems

A majority or plurality system is defined as an electoral system under which the candidate or candidates obtaining the greatest number of votes are declared elected. In practice, majority systems can be distinguished as follows: one-ballot majority voting, two-ballot majority voting, and multiple-ballot majority voting, in single-member or multi-member divisions.

TABLE II

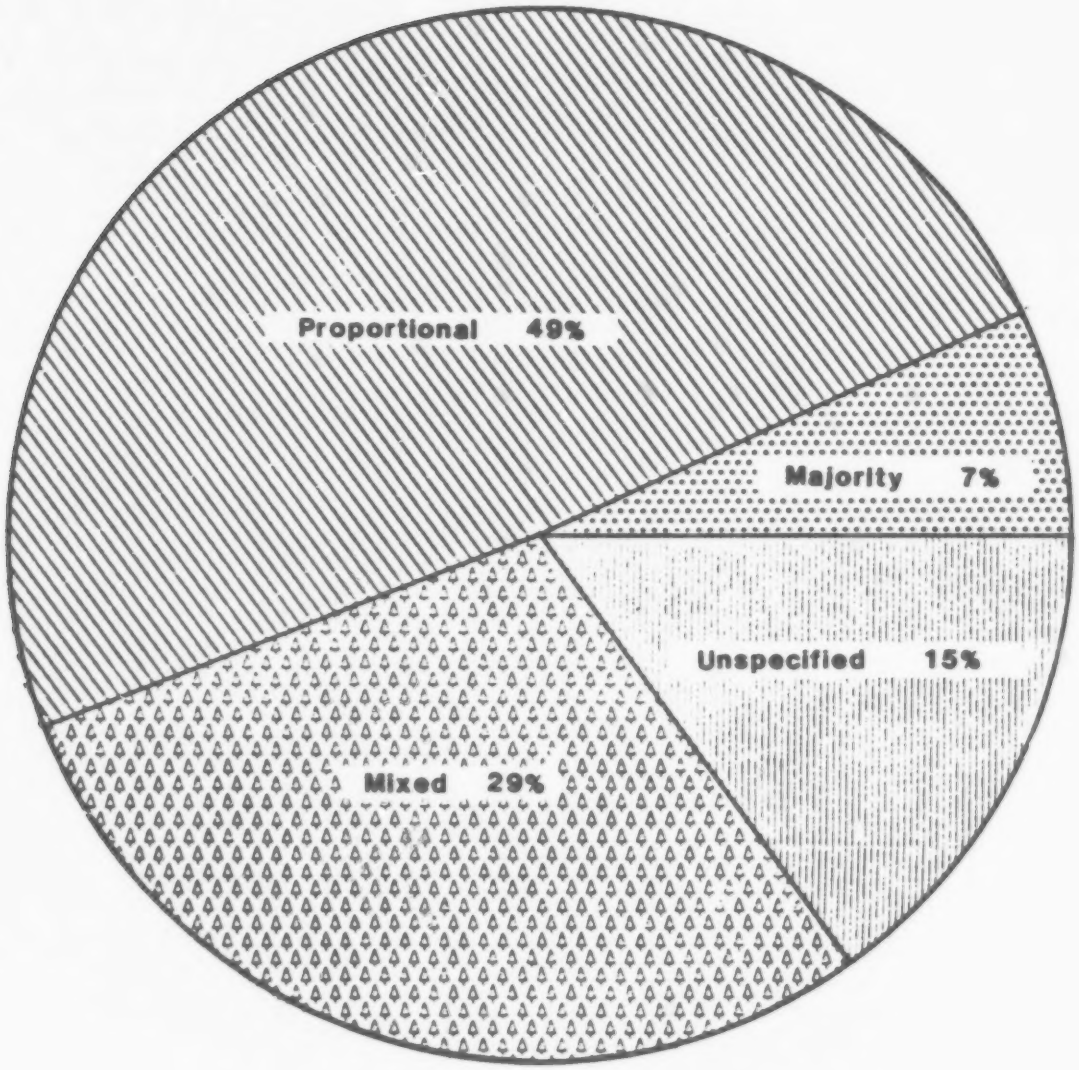
PROPOSED ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

MAJORITY	PROPORTIONAL	MIXED
. two-ballot (12)	. regional (118)	. single-member majority and regional compensatory (19)
. single-member (6)	. regional, with transfer of remainder to the national level (48)	. single-member majority and national compensatory (9)
. multiple-ballot (1)	. pure proportionality (9)	. 3/4 - 1/4 (1)
. dual representation (2)	. full proportionality, with regions (3)	. 1/2 - 1/2 (10)
. rationalized (1)	. selective (1)	. 2/3 - 1/3 (3)
		. local-regional-provincial (2)
		. majority, proportional, compensatory (2)
		. majority in rural areas and proportional in urban areas (2)
		. mixed compensatory in rural areas and proportional in urban areas (1)

* Figures in parentheses correspond to the number of participants who proposed each formula.

PIE CHART 11

ELECTORAL SYSTEM PREFERRED
BY ADVOCATES OF REFORM



MAJORITY

MIXED

PROPORTIONAL

UNSPECIFIED

On the basis of these general principles, participants formulated different proposals (see Table III). Advocates of a majority voting method clearly prefer two-ballot, single-member majority voting. The reason for this choice is the following: the present system should be maintained by making it fairer. It should be strengthened by implementing the rule of absolute majority. This would eliminate the distortions that we have experienced. The supporters of a two-ballot voting method believe that its introduction would facilitate expression of a true consensus and would permit greater governmental stability.

All those in favour of a majority voting system, whatever terms and conditions it embraces, believe that the representative quality of elected representatives vis-à-vis the electorate in each division should be ensured rather than representation of diverse ideologies in society.

The following arguments were proposed in favour of a majority electoral system:

- the rôle of the member is one of a representative and the electorate/elected relationship is better in small single-member divisions;
- the accountability of members is maintained;
- the system is simple and easy to understand;
- by way of two-ballot voting, multi-party politics are encouraged in a two-party system owing to possible alliances before the second round;
- the need to obtain an absolute majority of votes to be elected strengthens representativeness and ensures strong governments;
- distortions are corrected with a two-ballot poll.

Participants who believe that it is preferable to maintain the present voting system nonetheless propose ways to improve the system by various voting techniques (see Table III). They believe that parliamentary reform will influence the rules of the parliamentary game.

It should be mentioned that opponents of the present voting system and those who are opposed to any majority voting system assert that the vote continually gives rise to ambiguity (the candidate or the party), that majorities formed under

TABLE III

Proposed formulas for majority electoral systems.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM	PROPOSALS	OPERATION					
		National Assembly of	Number of divisions	Number of members per division	Voting	List of candidates	Distribution and allocation of seats
MAJORITY	One-ballot, single-member	-122 seats	122	1	Preferential vote		
				Undetermined	Single transferable vote		According to the single transferable vote
				Compulsory vote			-By absolute majority, i.e.: (1) candidates obtaining absolute majority are elected, and (2) remaining seats go to candidates with the highest number of votes, in decreasing order.
	Two-ballot, single-member	-120 to 135 seats	120 to 135	1			-The 1st ballot determines the 2 political parties to participate in the election; the 2nd ballot elects the representatives who, once elected, choose a leader;
		-122 seats	122	1			-use of a 2nd ballot in populated regions to elect extra representatives (density premium).
	Multi-ballot, single-member						-Candidates obtaining absolute majority are elected; the number of ballots is undetermined.

TABLE III (continued)

Proposed formulas for majority electoral systems.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM	PROPOSALS	OPERATION					
		National Assembly of	Number of divisions	Number of members per division	Voting	List of candidates	Distribution and allocation of seats
MAJORITY	Single-member, rationalized	-Undetermined	-- Fixed ----	-Undetermined	----------	----------	-Function of % of votes, i.e. on the basis of total provincial votes, calculation of a proportion for each political party on the basis of the ratio: total number of seats in the Assembly / number of votes received by party results in the variable number of additional seats
	Dual representation per division	-122 seats----	61 ----------	2 ----------	---Vote for the P.M. and for the Vice P.M.		

majority voting systems do not reflect the plurality of society, that elections leave too great a number of voters as "orphans", without a representative of their party in the Assembly, that the opposition in a majority system has no real rôle and acts as a pressure group by limiting itself to taking advantage of political mistakes committed by the governing party and by waiting patiently to take the reins of power.

3.2.2 Proportional systems

Proportional voting is defined as an electoral system that aims to give each party a number of seats equal to the percentage of votes it has obtained.

Proponents of a proportional electoral system justify their choice by asserting that such a system of representation would better respond to the new expectations of changing Québec society and that it would establish a satisfactory balance between urban and non-urban areas.

Moreover, it is thought that the very stern party discipline of majority voting systems, would be exercised less strictly. The functions of members would be greater, the responsibility for the safeguard of the development and interests of a regional division would entail group action in which the member would have a much freer hand.

Most participants in favour of a proportional voting system specified a system with a regional character. Each region would have a number of seats proportionate to the number of voters residing there. All supporters of this formula especially expressed their opinion on the proposal of the Minister responsible for Electoral Reform, called regional moderate proportional representation, but with variations in its operation and implementation. (see Table IV).

Arguments in favour of a regional proportional vote are:

. fairness of representation in the Assembly in proportion to the votes cast;

. improved representation of women;

. elimination of ambiguity: voting for the party or for the candidate;

. greater number of candidacies (diversity and complementary character of the candidates);

. a single method to elect all elected representatives (as opposed to a compensatory method);

. improved representation of third parties;

. more stable boundaries of divisions;

. presence of a real opposition in the Assembly;

. improved democratic life;

. several elected representatives per division representing more voters of different parties

. number of divisions and their more or less large size can ensure governmental stability because the strongest party would benefit from a premium;

. fairer representation of regions;

. improved rôle of the member by increasing his responsibilities (local and regional development);

. formation of the cabinet facilitated.

While developing their arguments for a regional proportional method, certain participants also singled out the disadvantages:

. a restriction on representation of all ideological trends in society;

. favouritism towards large political parties;

. difference of the relative weight between a voter in non-urban and a voter in urban areas;

. a penalty for the popular candidate in a region but whose party cannot participate in the distribution of seats;

. possibility of members all coming from the same centre, thereby neglecting less populated sub-regions for a given regional division;

. the problem of accountability in the case of a coalition government;

. significant changes in the electoral traditions and in political customs that would encounter resistance from voters and political parties.

In order to stave off these possibilities, participants suggested correctives to regional moderate proportional representation. Accordingly, it is proposed that the number of seats will be adjusted to the size of divisions in order to assist members in surmounting the difficulties connected with working in divisions that are too large.

TABLE IV

Proposed formulas for proportional electoral systems.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM	PROPOSALS	OPERATION					
		National Assembly of	Number of divisions	Number of members per division	Voting	List of candidates	Distribution and allocation of seats
PROPORTIONAL	Regional	-122 seats	-30 regional divisions	3 to 7	-Dual vote: choice of a party and of a candidate	- open	Highest average rule
		-122 seats		5			Two representatives for each political party obtaining 5% of the vote, three representatives guaranteed for a regional division for native peoples.
		-122 to 130 seats			Fixed date, vote for the party	-Primaries	
				3			Threshold of representation: 15%
				Some named by the P.M.			Threshold of representation: 10%, and representation of Inuit and Amerindians.
			Redivision of reg. div. by number of seats to which they are entitled		-Preferential vote	-Alphabetical order	Compensation for third parties
					-Approval vote		Threshold of representation: 10%
				Maximum: 5	Fixed date		Threshold of representation: 4%
			-Montréal: 2 or 3 reg. div.	from 15 or 17		-Block list	D'Hondt Method, one seat guaranteed for Iles-de-la-Madeleine, respect of independent candidates.

TABLE IV (continued)

Proposed formulas for proportional electoral systems

ELECTORAL SYSTEM	PROPOSALS	OPERATION					
		National Assembly of	Number of divisions	Number of members per division	Voting	List of candidates	Distribution and allocation of seats
PROPORTIONAL	Regional (cont'd)	-100 seats-	-10 or 12 around urban centres (with 5-15% of pop.)	-Odd number	2 separate ballot-papers Vote at home Fixed date	Alphabetical order	Highest average rule.
		-200 seats-			-Split voting	Open	
			x div. and x regions	-4 to 8 rural 7 to 8 urban		Blocked	Imperiali Method, by-elections for "vacancies"
		-122 seats-			-Renewal of half of the legislature every 2 years; vote for the party, for a regional rep. and for a local representative		

TABLE IV (continued)

Proposed formulas for proportional electoral systems.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM	PROPOSALS	OPERATION					
		National Assembly of	Number of divisions	Number of members per division	Voting	List of candidates	Distribution and allocation of seats
PROPORTIONAL	Regional and allocation of remainders on provincial level	-122 seats-	---30 regional div.	- 3 to 8		- 3 candidates per party	--- Establishment of a quota; remaining votes are allocated on provincial level.
				-5 to 10			-Unused votes are allocated on a provincial level.
				- 3 to 4			-Provincial seat for any party obtaining 4-5% of votes.
							-Establishment of a maximum quota; remaining votes are allocated on provincial level.
							-Party leaders appoint the number of members in proportion to the number of votes received; threshold of representation from 5 or 6%.
	Complete entity, with regions	-124 seats-	---15 to 20 reg. div.	------variable------	---Fixed date only 1 vote	----------	--- National quota and remaining votes are allocated to the lists of the same party in other regions.
	Complete entity without regions		- 1 ----	----------	---Voter's card -Split vote	- none----------	---viz. Israel or Romania -By age group; % of ages and % of votes obtained by each party
	Selective			known after elections	---Compulsory vote; voter's card	----------	---The leader of a party that obtains 10% of the vote is elected. Takes account in the allocation of seats, of the % of the vote obtained by each of the candidates in his/her division and of the % of the votes that each party obtains on a provincial level.

Other individuals proposed that legislation force the parties to choose candidates of the regional divisions according to a pre-determined geographic distribution within the divisions.

Generally, it is recognized that any proportional voting method, whether national, regional or with or without divisions, offers:

- a better guarantee of representation of the electorate, ideologies and different parties of a region;
- an increased democracy;
- an improved rôle as well as an increase in the responsibilities and participation of the members;
- a greater cohesion in political parties of party programs, plans of action and strategy.

A very high percentage of participants in favour of a proportional option state that the significant superficial area of Québec necessitates demarcation of the province into very large divisions in order to allow adequate representation of all its characteristic features.

3.2.3 Mixed systems

The mixed system is defined as a system that uses more than one voting system at the same time; each system applies to the election of a specific part of members. For example, a part (3/4, 2/3 or 1/2) is elected according to the one-ballot, single- member majority system in suitable divisions, and the remainder is elected in another type of division according to a variation on majority or proportional voting.

A very high percentage of participants who opted for a mixed electoral system structured their position on the basis of the formula approved by the National Executive Council of the Parti Québécois, i.e. a mixed compensatory electoral system. Several consider that this system ensures efficient representation of the population without endangering the formation of a majority government. Members elected under a compensation formula would first and foremost represent specific regions and would accordingly be more attentive to problems connected exclusively with these regions. More trends could be heard and more voters would actually be

represented. Its operation, they say, would strengthen the representation of parties in the National Assembly and would respect Québec traditions.

Arguments in favour of a regional compensatory mixed electoral system are:

. it has a slight over-representation for the winning party;

. it has all of the advantages of the present single-member system and corrects the phenomenon of over-representation and under-representation;

. it keeps small divisions that promote a close relationship between the electorate and their representatives;

. it favours the expression of a greater variety of opinions in parliament;

. it softens the party line.

Proposals in favour of a mixed electoral system are set out in Table V below.

Participants mentioned certain disadvantages connected with a mixed voting system:

. resistance of the electorate, less than with proportional voting;

. requirement to draw up two electoral maps;

. complexity in the distribution and calculation of seats by compensation;

. creation of two classes of members.

The exposé of the consultation given in the first part of the report is a synthesis and an analysis of all opinions and comments received by the Commission de la représentation. Readers interested in more detailed information are referred to the stenotyped notes of the proceedings of the public hearings assembled in 19 volumes and available on request at the office of the Commission.

TABLE V

Proposed formulas for mixed electoral systems.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM	PROPOSALS	OPERATION					
		National Assembly of	Number of divisions 7 regions	Number of members per division 9 per region	Voting	List of candidates	Distribution and allocation of seats
M I X E D	Single-member and regional compensatory	-150 seats	122 div. 28 reg.	1 div. 1 reg.	1 vote		In divisions, the candidate elected is the one who obtains the highest number of votes; for compensatory seats: (1) the % of votes obtained by each party under-represented by -3% is calculated, this results in the number of seats that this party should have, and (2) the difference between the number of seats that each party should have and the number of seats obtained in the divisions results in the number of compensatory seats to which each party is entitled. The candidate who has the highest number of votes in a given region wins this seat for the party that is entitled to it.
			-122 div. 25 reg.				
			-122 div. 15 to 20 regions				Threshold of representation: 20%; Iles-de-la-Madeleine entitled to one representative
			-122 div. 15 regions	1 div 1 or 2 by reg. (may change from election to election)			
		-122 seats	92 div. 30 regions				
		-variable	100 div. 30 regions				Threshold of representation: 5%
			-122 div. x regions				% of votes obtained in proportion to number of registered voters; real vote x 122 div. seats = x -

TABLE V (continued)

Proposed formulas for mixed electoral systems.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM	PROPOSALS	OPERATION					
		National Assembly of	Number of divisions and regions	Number of members per division and per region	Voting	List of candidates	Distribution and allocation of seats
M I X E D	Single-member and regional compensatory (cont'd)						Number of seats obtained in divisions by parties results in the number of members by compensation. Second ballot in divisions where a candidate has a % of votes less than 25% of the number of registered voters. Members of divisions with portfolio, regional members, without portfolio.
					Computerized card; preferential vote	----------	Requires absolute majority of votes to be elected.
		-134 seats	122 div. 6 reg.	1 div. 2 reg.	----------	----------	In divisions, single-ballot majority voting; regional members are appointed by party leaders, i.e. 6 for the Government and 6 for opposition parties.
		-134 seats	15 regions	6 by reg.	Dual decimal weighted preferential vote	----------	20 seats for provincial parties according to dual decimal weighted preferential vote; 90 regional seats (15 regions of 6 seats). 30 seats for candidates obtaining the highest % of votes (2 seats per candidate); 60 seats for parties according to regional proportionality (4 seats per party); 20 seats for provincial candidates; 4 seats of which 2 members are for representatives of youth and 2 for senior citizens; 10 seats for a new category of members representing the commonweal party (l'HARMONICRATIE).

TABLE V (continued)

Proposed formulas for mixed electoral systems.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM	PROPOSALS	OPERATION					
		National Assembly of	Number of divisions and regions	Number of members per division and region	Voting	List of candidates	Distribution and allocation of seats
M I X E D	Single-member and provincial compensatory		-100 or 105 divisions	----------	----------	----------	Compensatory seats if calculation of % of distortion is negative; then, half of the distortion is multiplied by the total number of seats of div., yielding the number of members that must be added to a party.
		-130 members	-110 div.	----------	Dual vote; a vote for the representative of div. and a vote within a party list	Party lists for compensation candidates	
		-122 seats	50 div.	-2 i.e.: 1 man and 1 woman and 22 members by compensation	2 votes	2 separate lists	
		-108 seats	----------	-1 member of div. and 14 members by compensation	Compulsory card	----------	54 members elected by majority ballot. 54 members elected by proportional ballot. 14 members by compensation for third parties.
			-122 div.	---- 1 ----------	----------	----------	Compensatory seats for third parties.
		-122 seats	-100 div.	---- 1 div. and 22 members by compensation on a provincial level	----------	----------	2 ballots for cases where absolute majority in a division is not attained; 15% of seats are allocated proportionately to votes cast in favour of defeated candidates for any party obtaining at least 5% of votes on a provincial level.

TABLE V (continued)

Proposed formulas for mixed electoral systems.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM	PROPOSALS	OPERATION					
		National Assembly of	Number of divisions and regions	Number of members per division and region	Voting	List of candidates	Distribution and allocation of seats
M I X E D	Single-member and provincial compensatory (cont'd)...		-122 div.	1 div. 20 to 30 provincial members by compensation			Ministers are chosen from among the 20 or 30 members designated by compensation.
		-100 seats	80 div.	1 div. and 20 provincial members by compensation			Ensures a minimum of 55 seats for the winning party and the distribution of remaining seats is made among the opposition parties that have not obtained a % of seats corresponding to the % of votes they received.
	3/4 - 1/4		- x div. and x regions		2 votes, 1 vote for the P.M. and 1 vote for the rep. of the div. and/ or region		
	2/3 - 1/3		- x div. and x regions			regional	Threshold of representation from 3 or 5%.

TABLE V (continued)

Proposed formulas for mixed electoral systems

ELECTORAL SYSTEM	PROPOSALS	OPERATION					
		National Assembly of	Number of divisions	Number of members per division	Voting	List of candidates	Distribution and allocation of seats
M I X E D	1/2 - 1/2	-150 seats	75 div. and between 12 and 15 reg.	1 div. and from 5 - 7 per reg.			viz. the German system (FRG)
		-140 seats	70 div. and 10 reg.	1 div.			70 reps. elected according to the single-member, one ballot majority electoral system and 70 reps. elected under the proportional system; a regional member is assigned to a region where the remainder of the division exceeds half of the average; the highest average rule
		-122 seats	61 div.	1 div.			1 seat for every party obtaining 1% of the vote. 61 reps. elected under the single-member, one-ballot majority system and 61 elected under the proportional system.
		-150 seats	75 div. and 12 or 13 reg.	1 div.		blocked	Ste-Laguë formula, division for the Inuit and Amerindians.
		-100 seats	50 div.	1 div. and 50 reps. elected by prop. rep.			Threshold of representation: 2%. Votes of parties with less than 2% of the provincial vote are redistributed proportionately among the other parties; by-elections.
		-180 seats	90 div.	1 div. and 90 allocated by prop. rep.		blocked	The 90 reps. elected under proportionality are elected according to % of vote obtained by the 3 parties receiving the highest number of votes.
		-122 seats	61 div.	2 div.	List voting, voter's card		The first party that obtains the majority of votes chooses the number of members in proportion to its % of the vote, then the second party and the third party do the same; party leaders are automatically elected, annual electoral list.

TABLE V (continued)

Proposed formulas for mixed electoral systems

ELECTORAL SYSTEM	PROPOSALS	OPERATION					
		National Assembly of	Number of divisions	Number of members per division	Voting	List of candidates	Distribution and allocation of seats
M I X E D	Local, regional and provincial	-135 seats--	60 div.------ 9 regions	1 div. 5 regions & 30 provincial members			
		-122 seats--	72 div.------ 10 regions	1 div.------ 5 regions	----------	----------	Calculation on a regional basis; remainders are pooled on a national level to determine the number of remaining seats going to political parties; highest remainder rule.
	Majority, proportional and compensatory	-122 seats--	94 RMC------ 10 regions	1 div.------ 1 region & 18 members by compensation for cities	----------	----------	Allocation of 1 compensatory urban member per 85 or 90 000 voters.
	Single-member, one-ballot, majority in rural areas and regional proportionality in urban areas						

PART TWO

POSITION OF THE COMMISSION DE LA REPRÉSENTATION

CHAPTER 4

EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION

4.1 THE CRUX OF OPINION: THE NEED FOR CHANGE

In the discharge of its mandate conferred by the National Assembly, the Commission held hearings to ascertain public opinion, the views of organizations, and the opinion of the members. It set up an informal method of consultation in order to allow the greatest and freest possible expression of opinion. The interest shown by the public, organizations and the media exceeded all expectations. The one regret that may be expressed is that a greater number of the members did not consider it advisable to personally make their choice known despite numerous invitations made available to them in accordance with the terms of the mandate which they themselves defined. In any event, since electoral legislation is principally directed at safeguarding voters' rights, it is not a tool especially designed to meet the objectives of elected representatives. Electoral legislation constitutes the means by which the citizenry freely exercises its choice of representatives in the National Assembly.

The opinions expressed (written and oral) during nineteen days of hearings or received at the offices of the Commission have one clear and unequivocal message: the vast majority of participants expressed the desire and the need for replacement of the present electoral system by proportional-type voting. Not only does the Commission acknowledge this desire, but it is required to give it full consideration.

During the hearings, the Minister responsible for Electoral Reform and the National Executive Council of the Parti Québécois firmly advocated the need to change the present electoral system although they differed as to the nature of the new system. The Commission will briefly assess these differences below. Other recognized parties also expressed their desire for change.

The position of the parliamentary wing of the Québec Liberal Party must also be very seriously considered. It delegated three representatives to the Commission. Most members of the Opposition in the National Assembly were in fact opposed to replacing the present electoral system by regional moderate proportional representation. Rather than opting for this electoral system, it would be better

in their opinion to keep the status quo. They added that they were presently studying this issue and that they would probably be in a position to make their opinion known in final form next Fall. In view of the deadlines set for the completion of its mandate, the Commission could not await their final position.

With regard to the attitude of representatives of the parliamentary wing of the Québec Liberal Party, the Commission recalls to mind that the last official party platform included a provision that the electoral system should be modified to a version of proportional representation. Moreover, is it possible to ignore that a change in the electoral system has been under study for several years? In fact, in 1971, the then government itself set up a working group to examine the question.

To the extent that public opinion was reflected by the comments received, the crux of this opinion clearly militates in favour of action. This is the opinion not only of the experts and of organizations, but also of a great number of individuals. Had the Commission failed to take a position favoring the weight of opinion, it would have failed in its duty to competently discharge its mandate--a mandate which was conferred unanimously by the National Assembly--and to accurately and faithfully report its findings.

The Commission has chosen to submit a recommendation to the National Assembly. Of course, this recommendation seeks first to resolve the distortions created under the present electoral system. By "distortion" we mean the difference between the percentage of seats obtained and the percentage of the popular vote. If our recommendation is accepted, we will never again experience the "snatch" of power of 1944 or 1966.

The Commission's recommendation is not imported wholesale from foreign systems, but reflects the reality of Québec as perceived during its tour of Québec. The intention was to create a home-grown system and not a carbon copy of something found in some other country. No care is too great when comparing electoral systems used elsewhere in what are always very special situations. The Chairman of the Commission concluded, on the occasion of his trip in January to study different

European electoral systems, that great care must be taken: the "high priests" of electoral science should be guarded against, as should all ex cathedra statements. In sum, electoral systems that reflect other social, political and geographical realities, cannot be transplanted in Québec without qualification.

The highlight of the Commission's recommendation is that the new system should be in tune with Québec's requirements. We call this system Territorial Proportionality. Strictly speaking, it would perhaps be better to refer to it as "territorial proportional representation" but for reasons of clarity, the Commission prefers "Territorial Proportionality".

Moreover, the Commission only expresses preferences and not fast and hard choices on all other aspects connected with its recommendation; it prefers to leave a large opening for discussions aimed at a consensus on these issues. The ways by which any proportional voting system is implemented are complex and varied, whether, for example, in connection with the type of candidate list, ballot-paper or electoral map.

It might be conjectured that certain factors influenced the decision to submit a recommendation to the National Assembly. This is entirely untrue. Rather, the Commission wanted to act responsibly in discharging its mandate by submitting a recommendation which would, in the future, allow for electoral dynamics more in keeping with the basic democratic principles of our political system.

4.2 SUMMARY OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

4.2.1 The present electoral system

The Commission is aware of the advantages of a one ballot, single-member, majority electoral system. It is simple and can be easily applied. Additionally, since this system is well-rooted in Québec's electoral and political traditions, it profits from being well-known and understood by the entire population. In most cases, it also allows for the formation of strong majority governments and ensures, by virtue of this very fact, a form of government stability. Finally, it facilitates a direct and preferred relationship with the electorate for certain classes of members, particularly in rural regions.

However, the Commission believes that the magnitude of distortions which have occurred in Québec under this electoral system is such that the system no longer suits the democratic character of our political system. All the evidence confirms that this electoral system does not reflect the pluralism that has marked the development of Québec society. Finally, the one-ballot, single-member, majority electoral system is not the best safeguard for the formation of majority governments. Past history, both in Canada and in Québec, has resulted in a number of minority governments elected on the basis of this electoral system.

From among all new solutions proposed during the consultation, two electoral formulas especially attracted comment from participants. The Commission considers that it must briefly explain why it has accepted neither. These two formulas are "regional moderate proportional representation", a proposal submitted by the Minister responsible for Electoral Reform, and "compensatory proportionality", a proposal of the National Executive Council of the Parti Québécois.

4.2.2 Regional moderate proportional representation

Although this system is truly "proportional" and embraces all the advantages of proportionality, regional moderate proportional representation was not accepted for three major reasons. Firstly, it is based on the existence of "natural regions" and fails to distinguish between urban and rural areas. The Commission believes that it does not do justice to the territorial diversity of Québec. As will be noted later, the feeling of "regional belonging", to which the proponents of this electoral system refer, cannot be taken for granted.

Secondly, its "moderate" character, by limiting to 5 or 7 the maximum number of seats per division, makes for a rather difficult breakthrough of new political associations acting as the vanguard for major trends of thought within Québec society. In fact, according to the mechanisms set out in the explanatory leaflet, it would be possible for a party obtaining 15% of the vote in any of the regional divisions to fail to elect any representative to the National Assembly. As was mentioned several times during the consultation, this is moderation gone overboard. It invites the risk of artificially perpetuating the two-party system in Québec by limiting representation of other currents of opinion.

Finally, although it is true to say that an interesting element of regional moderate proportional representation lies in the possibility given to the electorate to vote at the same time for both a party and a candidate, the Commission believes that this would considerably restrict the democratization of lists by limiting the preferences of voters to a single choice with respect to candidates, regardless of the number of seats up for election in a division.

4.2.3 Compensatory proportionality

This formula has the great advantage of a simple structure; the electorate would continue to vote in the same way as under the present system. The formula keeps the principle of one member per division; it would allow a party with 4% of the votes on a province-wide basis to elect at least one member. This system could almost be considered as "a step toward proportionality".

However, the Commission is of the opinion that the formula proposed by the National Executive Council of the Parti Québécois and defended by a number of participants, is not a truly proportional electoral system. Rather, is it a mixed system allowing for the election of part of the Assembly under the rules of the present electoral system and another part by compensation, with a view to righting the lack of balance resulting from a one ballot, single-member majority electoral system.

By maintaining the present electoral system, this proposal also retains its disadvantages. For no good reason, it creates two types of members with all that this entails, both for the electorate/elected relationship as well as for the operation of the National Assembly. The Commission considers that a significant part of the Assembly (approximately 25%) would be elected by a mathematical formula, which is difficult to understand, rather than by the electorate itself. Instead of dealing directly with the distortions, it would perpetuate them in the first instance, and then later attempt to mellow their side effects by a compensation mechanism.

Also, a mixed compensatory electoral system would necessitate two electoral maps. If, for example, 92 members were elected under the present system and 30 members held office by compensation, this would mean a return to the electoral map used several years ago to elect representatives under the majority system. If, on the other hand, the number of divisions is kept at 122, but with 28 or 30 seats for compensation, this would mean a significant increase in members sitting in the National Assembly, which does not presently seem desirable. Finally, the Commission believes that this formula might create more difficulties than solve problems arising under the present system.

4.2.4 The other formulas

The scheme of participants' opinions, as presented in the first part of this report, has shed light on the variety of proposals submitted to replace the present electoral system. Although it has attentively considered all these formulas, the Commission cannot obviously state its position on each. Certain proposals were the product of serious thought, while others were based on a futuristic viewpoint that is difficult to reconcile with the socio-political realities of this province.

The Commission does not fully accept any of these formulas for replacement because they do not meet the needs of all of the special features of Québec as described below. The Commission certainly recognizes the importance, both in quantity and quality, of the briefs and opinions submitted. It is on the basis of all of these opinions that it has structured its thinking and its recommendation in favour of a Québec-tailored electoral system.

4.3 QUÉBEC'S SPECIAL FEATURES

The Commission's recommendation for a change in the present electoral system is based, inter alia, on the need for a Québec-tailored electoral system reflecting the reality of the society to which it will apply. Several special features of this province have appeared sufficiently important for the Commission to integrate them in its recommendation.

These features are:

- concentration of the population;
- dispersal of the population;
- presence of ethnic and cultural minorities;
- pluralism of Quebec society;
- the native peoples;
- Iles-de-la-Madeleine.

4.3.1 Concentration of the population

Population on the island of Montréal and in the surrounding 20-30 kilometers is heavily concentrated. Other sectors also have a high urban concentration: Québec, Chicoutimi/Jonquière, Trois-Rivières/Shawinigan, Hull and Sherbrooke. Contrary to the situation of yesteryear, the majority of the population lives in these urban centres. Moreover, the population is settled on a linear basis because most Quebecers reside along the St. Lawrence River and its tributaries.

4.3.2. Dispersal of the population

Although Québec has a high concentration and density of population over a restricted area, there are, on the other hand, vast regions characterized by the linear settlement of their inhabitants, the dispersal and the low density of population. A few examples of the number of inhabitants per square kilometer will quickly permit an understanding of this particular feature of Québec. These examples are drawn from the mapping hypotheses of Québec which appear as separate schedules at the end of this report and which have enabled the Commission to identify three large regions. The grouping of Iles-de-la-Madeleine with the Gaspé is also only an hypothesis to which we shall later return.

Although the population densities for the Gaspé, Iles-de-la-Madeleine and the Lower St. Lawrence territories are approximately similar, road distances are not of the same order. Highway 132 is the only access to the Gaspé peninsula and the hilly terrain of the region contributes to a sense of isolation. Additionally, approximately 250 kilometers of water separate Iles-de-la-Madeleine from the town of Gaspé which is the main urban centre for the Gaspé region.

Traditionally, the number of members allotted to a region or to an electoral division is a function of its population. It will later be explained that the Commission recommends that the legislator acknowledge the special situation of three territories, i.e. the North Shore, Abitibi-Téminscamingue and Gaspé-Iles-de-la-Madeleine with respect to their electoral representation.

TABLE VI

DENSITY/DISTANCE OVER CERTAIN TERRITORIES

TERRITORIES	POPULATION DENSITY (inhab./km^2)	MAXIMUM DISTANCE (km[1])	MUNICIPALITIES CONSIDERED
Côte-Nord	3.7	659	Tadoussac to Havre-Saint-Pierre
Abitibi-Témiscaminque	8.4*	725	Témiscaming to Chibougamau
The Gaspé and Iles-de-la-Madeleine	14.2	711	Baie-des-Sables to Matapédia
The Lower St. Lawrence	15.9	303	La Pocatière to Causapscal
The Laurentians	34.4	256	Rosemère to Sainte-Anne-du-Lac
Mauricie	34.6	240	Maskinongé to Lac-Édouard

1. Maximum distance: the number of kilometers separating municipalities appearing in the right hand column under "Municipalities Considered"

* Calculation excludes the municipality of Baie-James.

Reminder: Ile Jésus has 1,093.5 inhabitants per km^2; the island of Montréal has 3,643.9 inhabitants per km^2.

4.3.3 Presence of ethnic and cultural minorities

Québec embraces numerous ethnic minorities. Its open spirit and goodwill and the understanding which Québecers have always shown to these minorities, because they themselves are a minority in North America, should be reflected in the practical operation and implementation of Québec's electoral system.

4.3.4 Pluralism of Québec society

The pluralistic character of Québec is today generally acknowledged. Freedom still finds fertile ground in this province. Insofar as possible, the pluralism of Québec society must be expressed in the National Assembly without bringing in its wake instability in government.

An electoral system can never by itself guarantee governmental stability because this stability is an intricate weave of the party system, parliamentary life, the electoral legislation, and even the social and economic realities of a given time. The desire to maintain at any price a strong stability in government would encourage disorder and anarchy if the pluralism of Québec society is not reflected on the floor of the National Assembly.

A country which has set up linguistic boundaries such as Belgium or has allowed the mushrooming of countless ideologies, such as Italy, cannot, under whatever electoral system, pretend to enjoy a continuous and stable governmental life.

4.3.5 The native peoples

A brief submitted to the Commission during the public hearings by representatives of the native peoples, specifically the Inuit, the Cree and Naskapee, demands representation in the National Assembly for these communities. (See Schedule D).

The Commission believes that this demand should be granted. The first inhabitants of Québec are entitled to be duly represented to allow their spokesmen to defend their legitimate interests on the floor of the Assembly, a body which also legislates for them. If other native nations residing in Quebec also made the same demand, the same reply should be given and for the same reason because they are the original inhabitants of Québec.

4.3.6 Iles-de-la-Madeleine

An examination of the electoral mapping hypotheses which the Commission has studied will disclose that Iles-de-la-Madeleine are included with the Gaspé as is the case with the boundaries of federal electoral constituencies. It should be recalled that this is only one alternative solution.

The insularity of this part of the province has, for a long time, prompted the legislator to treat representation for Iles-de-la-Madeleine as a special case. It will be up to the legislators to decide whether they should continue this policy.

CHAPTER 5

TERRITORIAL PROPORTIONALITY

5.1 THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION

The Commission's recommendation is the product of its own thinking and results from an analysis of the views and opinions submitted by the participants and an extensive research. All these factors have contributed to the recommendation that Québec adopt an electoral system which is proportional and territorial in nature.

5.1.1 Diversity of electoral systems

Several types of electoral systems are prevalent in democratic countries. When these systems are analyzed and studied on the spot, as the Chairman of the Commission did recently, the conclusion is that each country has an electoral system which is tailored to its needs and which corresponds to its political, sociological, historical and geographical requirements.

For example, the Belgian electoral system is proportional and has existed for about a century, but it alone cannot establish a fair balance between the conflicting linguistic forces that often are the cause for dissension and government instability.

The electoral system in use in the Federal Republic of Germany is mixed and predominantly proportional, but has touches of a one-ballot, single-member, majority electoral system. It was developed in response to the problems which existed under the Weimar Republic and after the Second World War it was imposed by the Allies. Not only does it not apply equally to all "lander", but there is a very large exception for citizens of the city of Berlin.

In Switzerland, elections are held on the proportional basis and there is constant recourse to public consultations--whether public initiatives or referendums. From time to time, coalition governments take power, but governmental stability is never jeopardized. Elections take place every four years.

France has a two-ballot, single-member majority system. One of its objectives is directed at "controlling" certain political factions which the system does not want to see obtain power. France uses a proportional electoral system for elections to the European parliament.

The Irish electoral system, using a single transferable vote, is also proportional. It was established to protect the country's principal religious denominations. On the occasion of two referendums, the population rejected the recommendation of the government to change this system. However, the implementation of this system is of such complexity that it raises problems of comprehension which the election officers and the voters must have of it, especially in the calculation of the allotment of seats.

The British electoral system is well known since this is the system used here. However, a strong movement is taking root in England to modify this system as a result of the last general elections when 42.4% of the votes gave the winning party a majority of 144 seats in the House of Commons. In short, each country is equipped with an electoral system adapted to its distinctive features and to its needs.

5.1.2 A fair approach to voting: proportionality

The fundamental objection brought to the Commission's attention in connection with the present electoral system is the frequent and significant differences between the number of seats awarded to parties and the percentage of votes cast. "The winner takes all" - "The first past the post" are expressions that quite adequately describe the effects of this relative majority electoral system. Table VII displays the results of Québec elections over the last 40 years. Suffice it to say that the electoral system has not always faithfully reflected the choices expressed by voters and, sometimes, has even led to a totally opposite result.

The Commission believes that the electoral system that should be adopted in Québec must be proportional because this is the type of system that best corrects distortions without creating two classes of members, as is the case with mixed voting systems. It gives each party a percentage of members corresponding as closely as possible to the percentage of votes that the party obtains at the election. It requires that at least three candidates stand for election. It necessitates the formation of party lists assembled by each political party and permits independent candidates to run for election.

STATISTICAL DATA ON GENERAL ELECTIONS

(1944 - 1981)

TABLE VII

YEAR	NUMBER OF ELECTORAL DIVISIONS	MEMBERS ELECTED					PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE					PERCENTAGE OF SEATS					DISTORTIONS				
		QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY	UNION NATIONALE	RALLIEMENT CRÉDITISTE	PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS	OTHERS	QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY	UNION NATIONALE	RALLIEMENT CRÉDITISTE (1)	PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS	OTHERS	QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY	UNION NATIONALE	RALLIEMENT CRÉDITISTE (1)	PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS	OTHERS	QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY	UNION NATIONALE	RALLIEMENT CRÉDITISTE (1)	PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS	OTHERS
1944	91	37	48	---	---	6	39.5	35.8	---	---	24.7	40.7	52.7	---	---	6.6	+ 1.2	+16.9	---	---	-18.1
1948	92	8	82	---	---	2	38.3	51.0	---	---	10.7	8.7	89.1	---	---	2.2	-29.6	+38.1	---	---	- 8.5
1952	92	23	68	---	---	1	45.8	50.5	---	---	3.7	25.0	73.9	---	---	1.1	-20.8	+23.4	---	---	- 2,6
1956	93	20	72	---	---	1	45.5	51.8	---	---	2.7	21.5	77.4	---	---	1.1	-24.0	+25.6	---	---	- 1.6
1960	95	52	42	---	---	1	51.4	46.6	---	---	2.0	54.7	44.2	---	---	1.1	+ 3.3	- 2,4	---	---	- 0,9
1962	95	63	31	---	---	1	56.4	42.1	---	---	1.5	66.3	32.6	---	---	1.1	+ 9.9	- 9,5	---	---	- 0.4
1966	108	50	56	---	---	2	47.3	40.8	---	---	11.9	46.3	51.9	---	---	1.8	- 1.0	+11.1	---	---	-10.1
1970	108	72	17	12	7	0	45.4	19.6	11.2	23.1	0.7	66.7	15.7	11.1	6.5	---	+21.3	- 3.9	- 0,1	-16.6	- 0,7
1973	110	102	0	2	6	0	54.7	4.9	9.9	30.2	0.3	92.7	0	1.8	5.5	---	+38.0	- 4.9	- 8.1	-24.7	- 0.3
1976	110	26	11	1	71	1	33.8	18.2	4.6	41.4	2.0	23.6	10.0	0.9	64.6	0.9	-10.2	- 8.2	- 3,7	+23.2	- 1,1
1981	122	42	0	---	80	0	46.0	4.0	---	49.3	0.7	34.4	0	---	65.6	---	-11.6	- 4.0	---	+16.3	- 0.7

Source: Directeur général des élections

(1) In 1973, the Ralliement Créditiste was called the «Parti Créditiste»

In sum, because it efficiently corrects the margins or distortions arising under the present electoral system, because it permits a better representation of the pluralism of our society, and because it reflects the opinion of a majority of participants heard by the Commission, the Commission believes that it is paramount to adopt a proportional electoral system. An important part of the Commission's work was therefore devoted to structuring the best possible adaptation of proportional electoral systems to the realities of Québec society.

5.1.3 A modern and Québec-tailored electoral system: Territorial Proportionality

The division of Québec into natural regions for electoral purposes would encourage an operation that is not grounded in reality. It is inaccurate to contend that throughout Québec there exists large so-called "natural" regions that can be ascertained, that is to say, extensive regions with their own well-determined characteristics giving rise to a feeling of belonging and where the residents identify with "their" region, "their" homeland.

The opinions expressed before the Commission, the observations made by the Commissioners during the consultation sessions, and the impossibility of assembling a large group of citizens within a geographical area that would permit everyone to unequivocally identify himself with this or that territory, demonstrate that the so-called natural regions in Québec are few and far between. On the other hand, it is possible to pick out many small "homelands" that already are difficult to accommodate on the present map of electoral divisions.

It must be remembered that Québec is already divided into a multiplicity of territorial regions for administrative purposes. These divisions, whether created for the administration of justice, highways or commerce, whether they are a function of health and social welfare, education or resource exploitation requirements, are not drawn up on the basis of any overall logic that would allow for integration of these divisions. Accordingly, it would be impossible to choose one among them for electoral purposes.

Other divisional groupings are already in place in Québec in connection with special requirements, i.e. the regional county municipalities and maybe in the near future, public action regions. The latter will serve to coordinate the activities of several participants. Municipal bodies are principally designed for a better development of the territory in accordance with well-identified growth patterns.

It is pure illusion to think that a territorial boundary division of Québec could be completed that would reconcile all these various divisions, subdivisions, regions and zones. It is also impossible to slice up Québec for electoral purposes into extensive natural regions. Accordingly, the Commission proposes to divide Quebec into territories which would respect both the very oldest and the most recent subdivisions, i.e. municipalities and their organization into regional county municipalities and urban or regional communities.

The expression "natural regions" is a geographic term used to describe any region set off by the natural features of the territory such as the terrain, water table, vegetation, climate, etc. Transposed or applied for electoral purposes, the analogy does not stand up to serious analysis, and above all, does not deal head on with political realities. The electoral system that the Commission recommends is therefore described as territorial because it includes electoral divisions that are not necessarily "regions".

Even if, in certain outlying regions of Québec, subdivision into "regions" for electoral purposes would be possible, this concept does not appropriately acknowledge provincial realities, especially in the densely populated parts of Québec. Consequently, the Commission uses a special boundary division which is called "territorial" and dismisses the notion of "region" as a basis for the electoral division of Québec.

5.2 AN ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN TUNE WITH QUÉBEC'S PERSONALITY

5.2.1 Concentration of the population

Territorial proportionality must adapt to and take account of the geographic division of the population of Québec. Since a vast majority of the electorate is concentrated in urban centres, these centres should delegate a total number of representatives to the National Assembly greater than that of the other territories.

To ensure that the electorate/elected relationship remains acceptable, the number of seats up for election per territory would be fixed by accounting for a 25% to 30% margin in relation to the provincial average of voters per member. Even if these margins may seem considerable, the Commission believes that it is not unthinkable to envisage the exceptional situation where territories in urban centres have a higher quota than other territories without, however, endangering the electorate/elected relationship.

5.2.2 A premium for dispersal in large territories: plus one

All proportional electoral systems fix the number of members by the proportion of voters residing in each territory. The equation is "X" voters = "Y" members. With reference to our mapping hypotheses, if this formula is applied to the North Shore, Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Gaspé-Iles-de-la-Madeleine, the Commission believes that voters in these areas would stand at a disadvantage. They would be penalized because they are represented by a number of members insufficient to accommodate the great distances that must be travelled in these regions.

For quality in the electorate/elected relationship that would be comparable to other territories in Québec, the Commission recommends that a territorial proportional voting system assign them a "premium", i.e. one member in addition to the number of representatives to which they would otherwise be entitled. If, on the basis of the working hypotheses of the Commission, Gaspé-Iles-de-la-Madeleine was only entitled to four members, the new "density/distance" factor would give them one additional member (4 + 1); the same "premium" would also be assigned to Abitibi-Témiscamingue (3 + 1) and to the North Shore (2 + 1).

5.2.3 Respect of ethnic and cultural minorities

A territorial proportional electoral system would also favour representation of ethnic and cultural minorities.

It would prompt political parties to enter on their party lists the names of representatives from the minorities to acknowledge the presence of these minorities in territories where they reside.

The Commission's preference, explained later in the report, in favour of an open list would also allow voters from ethnic minorities, who so desire, to identify more clearly their association with a group.

Territorial proportionality would allow for representation of ethnic minorities since the creation of territories with a large number of representatives, especially in metropolitan regions, would facilitate the election of representatives from these minorities. A candidate representing a minority would, in effect, have the chance of collecting a sufficient number of votes in a densely populated territory where there are several seats up for election.

Additionally, in the Commission's electoral mapping options and alternatives, it was concerned with the issue of fair representation of the large Anglophone minority on the Island of Montréal.

5.2.4 Expression of the pluralism of Québec society

For the best expression of the pluralism of Québec society, it is proposed that the number of seats up for election per electoral division be higher in territories with a high concentration of population. In this manner, the possibility of spokesmen advocating the break-through of new views into the National Assembly would be facilitated. This would permit differing trends in society to have their say without bringing about any chronic governmental instability.

5.2.5 A representative for the native people in the National Assembly

The location of native peoples over any given territory and their relatively small numbers do not allow for the election of their representative in the National Assembly under the proportional voting system. Accordingly, the Commission recommends that this member be elected according to the rules of the present electoral system, i.e. a one-ballot, single-member majority system. The native peoples' territory would be drawn up based on the regrouping of the localities in which they currently reside.

5.2.6 Iles-de-la-Madeleine: the status quo?

The Commission has relegated to the legislator the decision of whether Iles-de-la-Madeleine should remain an exception and form a single electoral division. In this case, the division would continue to elect one representative to the National Assembly on the basis of the present electoral system on account of its small number of voters. This approach would clearly not overturn the basic principles in favour of territorial proportionality for the rest of Québec.

5.3 A NEW ROLE FOR THE MEMBER

The important work of a member consists in acting as an intermediary, go-between and advisor to his voters. This importance cannot be minimized. To sweep away this function and only to consider a member of the National Assembly in his legislative role would be entirely incorrect. Whatever the polling method used for election of a representative, this representative must have continuous and preferential relations with his constituents. This is one of his duties of office, if only because the first of his rightful concerns is to ensure his re-election in the next elections. An individual who stands for a seat in the National Assembly makes a career choice--a choice to work to represent the electorate that has conferred upon him this office and the choice to legislate in an assembly for the greater good of society.

Therefore, it is understandable that this individual would want to hold office for more than a term. To do so, he must have constant and direct relations with his electorate and the associations and groups operating in his field so that everyone feels that they have "their" representative working for them in the National Assembly.

The electorate/elected relationship varies and depends considerably on whether a member represents an urban division or a predominantly rural division. In practice, this relationship is carried out to a healthy extent by the administrative services available to members of the National Assembly for each of the 122 present electoral divisions. It should be noted that the member generally deals with specific demands that come to him from his constituents and that these constituents will continue to express their grievances or make their appeals even under a proportional electoral system.

Because representatives are elected for a large division and because they are no longer alone but members of a group, a proportional electoral system might create the impression of dissolving the electorate/elected relationship. Essentially, a proportional polling method modifies the electorate/elected relationship by basing representation no longer on individuals but on a group of individuals of a single party or of different political backgrounds. Each member of the group should communicate with his electorate for the same reasons as mentioned above. He should, however, acknowledge a new reality based on the presence of his fellow members and on the requirements for sharing duties. Although the distances involved in covering the territory represented are greater than under the present electoral divisions, a proportional electoral system imposes, it is true to say, new constraints; however, the large size of the divisions is also a significant advantage in allowing for the study and solution of problems within a more global and realistic light.

On the other hand, the solution proposed by the Commission recognizes that a constraint imposed by the density/distance ratio exists for certain vast regions of Québec. The solution proposes an original and newly-conceived factor for maintaining an acceptable quality in the electorate/elected relationship within these territories.

5.4 BOUNDARIES OF ELECTORAL DIVISIONS

The mapping of the territory will be the responsibility of the Commission in the event, obviously, that the National Assembly should decide to follow through with the Commission's recommendation. The Commission would then proceed to map Québec into electoral divisions on the basis of the requirements of the new electoral system, grouping criteria, and the number of voters, after consultation with the public, associations and members of the National Assembly, and in accordance with its governing legislation. Since this mapping would not be based upon so-called regional boundaries, and given the characteristic mobility of the Québec population, the Commission does not believe that it is possible to come up with an "immutable" territorial division. Accordingly, the electoral map should be revised at intervals as of yet unspecified.

5.4.1 Parameters

The choice of an electoral system necessarily affects the determination of the boundaries of electoral divisions. The word "territorial" as used in the term "Territorial Proportionality" has a specific meaning which is tied to Québec's features.

Mapping of an electoral territory to form a division should be made by considering inter alia and to the extent possible, the following parameters:

(a) to create territories where the population is sufficiently large to allow allotment of three seats, that is to say, the minimum standard for operation of the principle of proportionality;

(b) to tend toward an average number of voters per seat (or the voter-member ratio) which corresponds to the average number on the present electoral map, i.e. slightly more than 36,000 voters;

(c) to map territories that, to the extent possible, would be collections of regional county municipalities and which, within urban communities, would conform to municipal boundaries.

In addition to these general guidelines, there are a number of more particular criteria that deserve recognition and that would allow for electoral mapping in tune with the very special features of Québec society:

(a) to establish territories, that, to the extent possible, distinguish between urban and rural environments;

(b) to assign, when allotting seats, a premium (one additional seat) to territories characterized by low population density and by great distances;

(c) to establish a division for the territories of the Cree, Inuit and Naskapee nations that would be represented by a member elected according to the one-ballot, single-member majority electoral system.

5.4.2 Mapping alternatives

With a view to ascertaining the appropriateness of its proposals, the Commission studied the operation and implementation of its proposal on the basis of two mapping alternatives. These alternatives are appended to this report as separate schedules, together with an explanatory text, as Schedule E. The mapping of Québec into territories for electoral purposes can only be concretely implemented and satisfactorily completed when all components of the new electoral system have been determined.

Moreover, since the Commission is the institution that, in the last resort, may be responsible for completing this mapping as provided under current legislation (S.R.Q. chap. R-24.1), these working hypotheses should not be considered as binding upon the Commission in the future. In this field, as with several of the methods of implementation, the Commission expresses no choice, and in the case at hand, it does not even express a preference with respect to either of the mapping alternatives. It has only suggested these alternatives by considering Québec's characteristics--characteristics with which any mapping for electoral purposes should comply in the future, or risk being cut off from reality.

5.5 SIMULATED SCENARIOS

The first objective of the simulated scenarios is to verify whether, in applying territorial proportionality, the percentage of seats awarded to the different parties corresponds to the percentage of votes that they have obtained.

The two scenarios outlined in Tables VIII and X here have been compiled on the basis of the 1981 and 1973 election results. The results of these two elections have been transposed within each of the 22 divisions of Hypothesis 1 and each of the 24 divisions of Hypothesis 2.

Deadlines have not allowed the Commission to develop these simulated scenarios with all the mathematical and scientific rigor desired. For example, the results of the advance poll have been allotted to divisions according to the relative importance of each part of the territory. Additionally, any simulation of this type must be handled with great reservation since it is true to say that a future change in the electoral system will bring about changes in the electoral behaviour of the population--these changes could manifestly not be considered. Finally, this exercise does not account for the fact that the elections are simulated on territories, the configuration of which could only have been imagined in 1973 with great difficulty.

A review of the tables outlining these simulated scenarios discloses that Territorial Proportionality considerably reduces the margins between the percentage of seats and the percentage of votes obtained by each of the political parties. Thus, in 1973, the high distortion that resulted under the current electoral system, i.e. +38% for the Québec Liberal Party and -24.7% for the Parti Québécois would have been reduced to +5.3% and +1%, respectively, according to Hypothesis 1 and to +7.5% and +1.3% according to Hypothesis 2.

Similarly, in 1981, the distortion would have been considerably reduced to obtain an acceptable level. The precarious majority which the Parti Québecois would have obtained as a result of this election would have allowed this party to govern Québec without fear of chronic instability, since it would have been guaranteed a constant and unchanging majority during its term of office if the operation of the new system, as suggested below by the Commission, is generally agreed to.

COMPARATIVE TABLE

ACTUAL AND SIMULATED RESULTS
OF THE 1981 ELECTIONS.

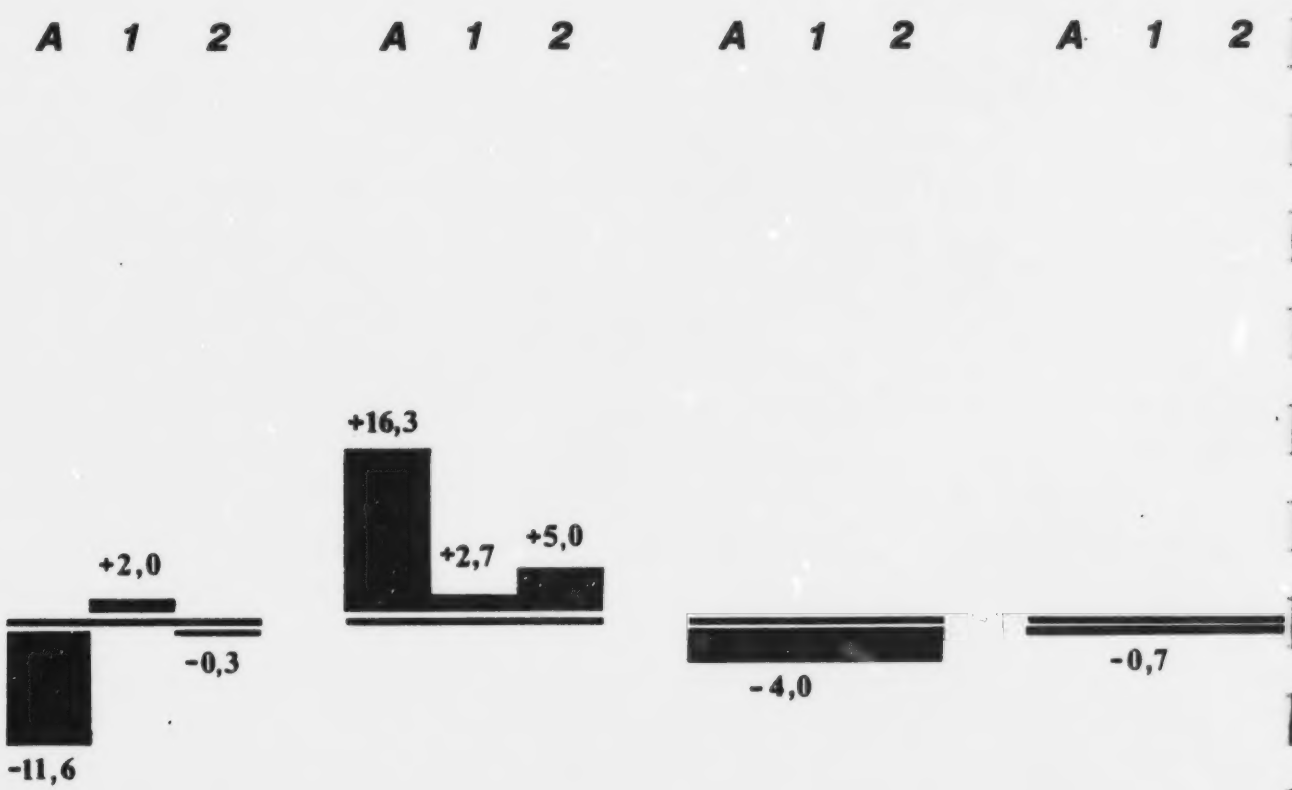
TABLE VIII

ELECTORAL SYSTEM	QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY				PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS				UNION NATIONALE				OTHERS			
	Number of seats	% of seats	% of the vote	% Distortion	Number of seats	% of seats	% of the vote	% Distortion	Number of seats	% of seats	% of the vote	% Distortion	Number of seats	% of seats	% of the vote	% Distortion
PRESENT:																
1981 Map	42	34.4	46.0	-11.6	80	65.6	49.3	+16.3	0	0	4.0	-4.0	0	0	0.7	-0.7
PROPOSED:																
Map Hypothesis 1*	60	48.0	46.0	+ 2.0	65	52.0	49.3	+ 2.7	0	0	4.0	-4.0	0	0	0.7	-0.7
Map Hypothesis 2*	58	45.7	46.0	- 0.3	69	54.3	49.3	+ 5.0	0	0	4.0	-4.0	0	0	0.7	-0.7

(*) These two hypotheses include the Cree, Inuit and Naskapee electoral division.

1981 DISTORTIONS

Graphic 1



Electoral system A: Present & 1981 map
1: Proposed & hypothesis 1
2: Proposed & hypothesis 2

COMPARATIVE TABLE

ACTUAL AND SIMULATED RESULTS
OF THE 1973 ELECTIONS.

TABLE IX

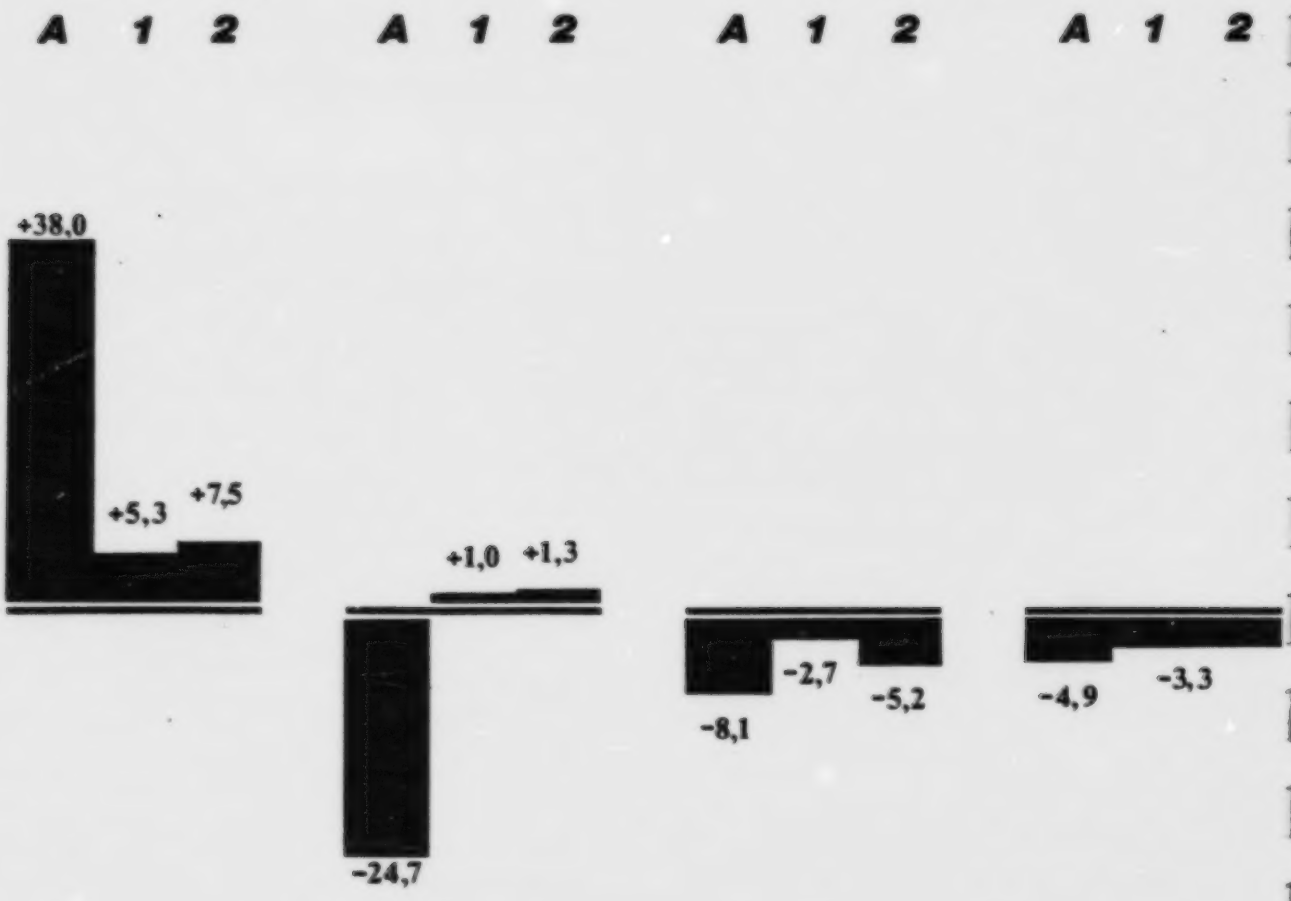
ELECTORAL SYSTEM	QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY				PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS				PARTI CRÉDITISTE				UNION NATIONALE			
	Number of seats	% of seats	% of the vote	% Distortion	Number of seats	% of seats	% of the vote	% Distortion	Number of seats	% of seats	% of the vote	% Distortion	Number of seats	% of seats	% of the vote	% Distortion
PRESENT:																
1973 Map	102	92.7	54.7	+38.0	6	5.5	30.2	-24.7	2	1.8	9.9	-8.1	0	0	4.9	-4.9
PROPOSED:																
Map Hypothesis 1*	75	60.0	54.7	+ 5.3	39	31.2	30.2	+ 1.0	9	7.2	9.9	-2.7	2	1 6	4.9	-3.3
Map Hypothesis 2*	79	62.2	54.7	+ 7.5	40	31.5	30.2	+ 1.3	6	4.7	9.9	-5.2	2	1 6	4.9	-3.3

(*) These two hypotheses include the Cree, Inuit and Naskapee electoral division.

N.B.: 3% of the electorate voted for other parties or independent candidates resulting in a distortion of -0.3%.

1973 DISTORTIONS

Graphic II



QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY | PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS | PARTI CRÉDISTE | UNION NATIONALE

N.B. 3% of the electorate voted for other parties or for independent candidates, resulting in a distortion of -0,3

Electoral system

A: Present & 1973 map

1: Proposed & hypothesis 1

2: Proposed & hypothesis 2

5.6 PREFERENCES RATHER THAN RECOMMENDATIONS
A few simple and operational applications

Once a decision has been taken in favour of a territorial proportional electoral system from and for Québec, the means to implement the new recommended system may vary considerably. Firstly, only a few briefs or comments were received by the Commission that analyzed in detail all the operations inherent in an electoral system. Consequently, it is not possible to come up with any precise guidelines on the basis of the consultation. Additionally, the short time schedule allowed for completion of its mandate did not allow the Commission to analyze as profoundly as would have been desirable the consequences of the many different operational mechanisms over the entire electoral and political systems in Québec.

However, the Commission has considered it advisable to express certain preferences with respect to the operation of the formula of which it recommends implementation. These are only preferences and are expressed on the basis of a study of the file at the time of writing this report.

5.6.1 Number of seats

At the outset, the Commission sought to keep this number as close as possible to present numbers (122) without making 122 a categorical imperative. The operation of the principles of the two mapping alternatives suggested in this report fixes the number of seats respectively at 125 (Hypothesis 1) and 127 (Hypothesis 2). The Commission also envisaged an hypothesis (not included in this report) that would reduce the number of members of the Assembly to 118. It is only after completing the new electoral map and after consulting the public, that the Commission can allot a specific number of seats to each division and thus fix the total number of members in the National Assembly in compliance with the obligations the current Act has imposed upon it.

5.6.2 Allotment of seats to different parties

For the purpose of assigning seats to different parties within each division, the Commission suggests use of the d'Hondt method. This method consists in successively dividing the results obtained by each of the parties by 1-2-3...(up to the total number of seats up for election). Then, seats are allotted to

political groups that have obtained the highest averages. Compared to other methods (Imperiali or Sainte-Laguë, for example), this process results in assigning a larger premium to the winning party, thus avoiding the need for legal recourse to a minimum threshhold to minimize the multiplication, often qualified as "artificial", of small parties.

The Commission believes that the size of the new divisions, as well as the number of seats which will be allotted to them, will adequately allow expression of the pluralism of Québec society without, however, compromising government stability.

5.6.3 Creation of the lists

Any proportional electoral system is "list voting" in that it allows the election of several representatives. In this regard, the Commission suggests that the number of candidates that a party may enter on its list vary from one up to a maximum of the number of seats up for election. For example, in a division of 10 seats, a political party could not submit a list containing more than 10 names. We will later discuss the question of vacancies resulting from the death or resignation of an elected candidate.

With respect to the choice of candidates entered on the list, the Commission acknowledges that there is a well-established tradition in Québec of respecting the autonomy of political parties in this domain. However, and this problem was raised on a number of occasions during the hearings, a very real risk is present, especially in large rural or semi-urban divisions, of having political parties exclusively choose candidates coming from urban centres. Consequently, the Commission favors in these cases some regulation of the choice of candidates in order to ensure the presence of candidacies representing those parts of a territory that are far from urban centres. However, should any suggestion be made to reach the same objective without the need for regulation, the Commission would rally to it without reservation.

The order of presentation of candidates on the list should be left to the political parties, and this is especially so since the Commission favors open lists.

5.6.4 Types of lists

There are two main types of lists used in the operation of the various types of proportional voting: block lists and open lists. In block lists, the vote goes to the political party and the elected representatives are determined on the basis of the order established by that party. This type of list has undoubtedly one major advantage. It is simple, both for the voter and for the returning officers. However, it takes from the voter his initiative in the choice of candidates by imposing the strong arm of the parties in the choice of the elected representatives.

Considering the numerous efforts undertaken over the last few years by the Québec legislator to make the electoral system more democratic and to adapt it to the fundamental rights and freedoms of voters, the Commission suggests that the electorate be given the choice of choosing its representatives by favoring a type of open list. The Commission will go even further and propose an open list of the split-vote type that would permit the voter himself to determine his choice of candidates without restricting him to a single list. The Commission acknowledges that this would be a significant change in the normal way of making a choice on the ballot, and that this change might appear quite complicated to some voters if they were obliged to indicate an exhaustive choice of their preferences. This is why it is proposed that the choice be left to the voter as to whether or not he wishes to make use of the freedom offered to him in the choice of candidates.

5.6.5 Exercise of the right to vote

With respect to the exercise of the right to vote, the Commission submits, as a preference and not a recommendation, the following proposals:

(a) The voter would first opt compulsorily for a party or an independent candidate (first vote). On the basis of the compilation of these votes, the number of seats would be allotted to the different parties and independent candidates. The relative strength of different political groups on the floor of the National Assembly would thus be ascertained.

(b) Subsequently, the choice would be left to the voter:

1. Either to fully accept the list of the party to which he has given his first vote. There would therefore be no further mark on his ballot and, at the time of counting, one vote would be allotted to each candidate on the party list of the party to which he has cast his vote.

2. Or, the elector may indicate his choice for a certain number of candidates (except obviously independent candidates who are treated in a proportional electoral system in the same way as political parties) equal or less than the number of seats up for election in the division. In this instance, when counting the votes, only the votes allotted to these candidates in particular would be taken into consideration. Once again, an individual would vote for the candidate of his choice appearing on the list of any party whatsoever (panachage) (split-voting).

Some may raise the objection that, in most countries where this possibility is offered to the voters, a very large majority of voters express no preference for the candidates and simply ratify the list of the party of their choice. This is true, but the Commission considers that it is not a sufficiently convincing argument to take away from voters who so desire the possibility of designating individuals whom they consider most suitable to represent them in the National Assembly. This procedure would also allow some classes of the electorate to more clearly indicate their allegiance to certain groups by voting directly for the candidates with whom they identify themselves, on whatsoever list these candidates are entered.

Finally, if this new way of voting is generally agreed to, the Commission considers it advisable that an in-depth study be conducted to analyze the possibilities of adopting new voting operations and techniques that would make the exercise of the right to vote as simple as possible and that would facilitate the compilation of results.

5.6.6 Independent candidates

The Commission proposes that an independent candidate be treated in the same way as a political party, both with respect to the allotment of seats and with respect to the exercise of the right to vote. This proposal therefore implies that a voter who casts his first vote in favour of an independent candidate would, just like any other voter, be able to indicate his preferences for a number of candidates equal or less than the number of seats up for election in a division less one. On the other hand, a voter whose first vote is given to a political party would not be able to designate an independent candidacy if he were to express preferences in favor of a certain number of candidates.

5.6.7 Candidates declared elected

After having determined, as mentioned above, the number of seats to which each party is entitled, the individual who obtained the greatest number of preferences from voters within each of these lists would be declared elected. For example, if party X is entitled to 5 seats, the 5 candidates who obtained the most votes within its list would be declared elected.

A problem arises when the elected candidates entered on a party list must or decide to leave their political party for any reason whatsoever during their term. The Commission proposes that henceforth a change of allegiance will no longer be possible for two major reasons. Firstly, it must be remembered that candidates would be elected on the basis of votes cast in favour of a political party. This would ensure that the basic choice of the voters is respected. Secondly, since a proportional voting system no longer guarantees the winning party as high a premium as currently, steps must be taken to prevent candidates from "crossing the floor" and the consequent possibility of a climate of government instability.

Accordingly, the Commission is of the opinion that a candidate elected under the banner of one political party, whether he must or wants to leave the Assembly, be forced to resign and be replaced by a candidate of the same party according to the techniques detailed below. Of course, the resigning member would be able to put forward his candidacy at the next general elections under the banner of the party of his choice or as an independent candidate.

5.6.8 Vacancies in the National Assembly

The Commission proposes that except for very special circumstances, no further by-elections be held in Quebec. A seat made vacant in the National Assembly, either on account of death or resignation of a member, should be filled by a candidate from the same list as that which was used for the election of the deceased or resigning member. Consequently, it would be from among candidates who were not elected from this list at the time of the general elections that an individual who obtained the greatest number of votes would be asked to sit in the National Assembly.

It may happen that for various reasons there are no more available or interested candidates on the list of the same political party. This is why the Commission would be in favour of each party submitting a list of substitutes at least equal to half the number of candidates proposed for purposes of the election. Where rarely required, this substitute list could be consulted in order to fill vacant seats according to the order of appearance of the names on this list. Each political party would send to the Directeur général des élections its list of substitutes and the latter would be obliged to publish this list to inform the electorate within each of the electoral divisions.

5.6.9 Other electoral mechanisms

Many other electoral mechanisms would eventually be modified if the recommendations proposed by the Commission are accepted, such as party financing and the general administration of elections. A well-structured information campaign would also be necessary to adequately inform the electorate of future changes.

The Commission is, however, convinced that given the time frame, it has provided sufficient material for thought to encourage the necessary discussions with a view to obtaining a consensus on the operation and implementation of its recommendation. Other electoral mechanisms can and must be adjusted to any decision concerning the future of the Québec electoral system.

CONCLUSION

The Commission de la représentation électorale therefore submits its recommendation that a new electoral system be adopted in Québec known as "Territorial Proportionality". In making this recommendation, it is fully aware of its responsibility under the mandate conferred by the National Assembly. It makes this recommendation as a result of the findings based upon the opinions expressed before it during the hearings or otherwise.

This recommendation flows from an analysis of the situation and from a study of the Québec context. It is a recommendation originating from Québec for Québec. The Commission's choice deals with essentials. As for the rest, it only expresses preferences and leaves to the debate that follows presentation of its report the task of establishing the parameters that will complete it.

If the National Assembly decides to radically change the present electoral system, the Commission strongly suggests that someone, whether an individual, organization or institution, be given the responsibility of closely studying the operation and implementation of the new system during the next two consecutive general elections and of reporting to the National Assembly by submitting comments and recommendations. This supervision and adaptation has the advantage of quickly allowing any necessary amendment to the system after having "lived" through two general elections. It should be remembered that no polling method is hard and fast, that polling is only one of the components of an electoral system and of democratic institutions, and that any system must be tailored to the development of society.

Additionally, the Commission is quite aware of the numerous and somewhat divergent opinions that pepper the debate on reform of the electoral system. It sincerely hopes that differences in opinion will be expressed in a lively but healthy atmosphere of debate, so that the electoral system in Québec reaches its objective: to reflect as accurately as possible the choice of the electorate.

Resistance to change did not appear in the eyes of the Commission as a major obstacle to a complete overhaul of the electoral system. If the public is adequately informed, the population will be more welcoming and receptive to a new electoral system than is generally believed.

The final decision lies with the National Assembly: over to the members! The Commission was charged with preparing a study--and it has done so--and submitting, if it considered it advisable, its recommendations--which it has done. Events will follow their political course.

SCHEDULE A

THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN QUÉBEC - AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN QUÉBEC - AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

I - 1791 - 1867: Birth of the Québec political structure

A proclamation originating in England, under the powers conferred by the Constitution Act of 1791, ordered the partition of the Province of Québec into electoral divisions.[1] On 7 May 1792, the Province was divided into 27 electoral divisions. Each division was to elect two members, with the exception of the counties of Bedford, Gaspé, Orleans and William Henry where numbers did not permit more than one representative.

The first elections in the Province of Quebec took place on 10 July 1792. This led to the formation of the first Assembly, which was made up of 50 members. The elections were conducted on the basis of one-ballot majority voting in ridings with both single and double representation as was then the practice in Great Britain.

The most important changes during this period were the frequent redrawing of county boundaries as a result of the development of the Province and the rapid growth of its population. In 1829, county boundaries were again redrawn. A new provision in the Act provided that each new county that had a population of 1 000 would have one representative, that a county with 4 000 inhabitants would have two representatives, and that a county with less than 1 000 inhabitants would be annexed to the neighbouring county with the smallest population. Only the cities of Québec and Montréal would be represented by four representatives each.

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1 The Constitution Act of 1791, (31 Geo. III, chap. 31)

After the 1830 elections, the Assembly consisted of 84 members for a total population of 550 000 inhabitants; a representation of one member for every 6 548 inhabitants.

STATISTICS ON REPRESENTATION: 1792 TO 1984[1]

1792 - 1830 : The Assembly of the Province of Lower Canada consisted of 50 members elected from 27 counties

1830 - 1832 : 84 members; 45 counties

1832 - 1836 : 88 members; 46 counties

1836 - 1838 : 90 members; 46 electoral counties of which 39 had 2 representatives, 5 had 3 representatives and the remaining 2 had only 1 representative

1841 - 1854 : 42 members; 40 electoral counties had 1 representative, and Québec and Montréal had 2 representatives

(*) In 1853, an Act fixed the number of members in the Assembly at 65.

1854 - 1857 : 65 members; 61 electoral counties. The cities of Québec and Montréal had 3 representatives until 1860 - 1861

1857 - 1861 : 65 members; 63 electoral counties

1861 - 1867 : 65 members; 65 electoral counties

1867 - 1890 : 65 members; 65 electoral districts

1890 - 1897 : 73 members; 73 electoral districts

1897 - 1912 : 74 members; 74 electoral districts

(*) As of 1861, each county was represented by a single representative; the method of election was that of a single-member, one-ballot, majority vote.

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[1] Desjardins, Joseph. Guide parlementaire historique de la province de Québec - 1792 à 1902. Library of the Québec Legislature. Québec 1902. Pages 83-4, 90-2.

STATISTICS ON REPRESENTATION: 1792 TO 1984[1]

1912 - 1923 :	81 members; 81 electoral districts
1923 - 1931 :	85 members; 85 electoral districts
1931 - 1939 :	90 members; 90 electoral districts
1939 - 1944 :	86 members; 86 electoral districts
1944 - 1948 :	91 members; 91 electoral districts
1948 - 1956 :	92 members; 92 electoral districts
1956 - 1960 :	93 members; 93 electoral districts
1960 - 1964 :	95 members; 95 electoral districts
1965 - 1972 :	108 members; 108 electoral districts
1972 - 1980 :	110 members; 110 electoral districts
1980 - :	122 members; 122 electoral divisions

In 1867, the constitution of the Province of Québec was integrated into the British North America Act. The Canadian federation was born. This constitutional system created a central power made up of a Governor General appointed by the Imperial Government (Great Britain), of a Senate in which each province was proportionally represented, and of a House of Commons that was elected directly by the voters of all the provinces.

1 Reports on the general elections for the Province of Quebec for the years 1912 to 1981.

This system also provided that each province could proceed to set up an autonomous legislative body, i.e., that each province had the freedom to organize its elections independently from those of the Canadian federation.

II - 1867 - 1960: The Québec political system

In the Spring of 1875, the Election Act was amended, changing the nature of the voting and the duration of elections. Voting became secret and election balloting took place on a single day.

A century of tranquility has characterized our electoral system. The electoral map is constantly realigned in pace with the development of the Province. The numerous fluctuations between the number of inhabitants in the various counties give rise to frequent reforms of the electoral map.

The voting method and the type of representation we have known since the very first elections have not been challenged. Rather, they have been accepted and considered as natural concomitants of our system. No one queries the operation and real effects of the single-member, one-ballot majority voting method on the Québec political system.

In 1940, women received the right to vote.

III - 1960 - 1966: the government under Jean Lesage

In 1960-62, new social structures came alive in Québec. They expressed their views through the emergence of new political parties (Rassemblement pour l'Indépendance Nationale [RIN], Ralliement National [RN]).

Between 1962 and 1966, the government under the Lesage administration put reform of the electoral map on its list of priorities, but left the unforeseeable effects of and questions about the voting method without answer.

Overall Assessment

Throughout Quebec elections, one notes the persistence of the dual party system despite the appearance on a number of occasions of multiparty politics, for example, in the elections of 1944, 1966, 1970 and 1973.

Nonetheless, the question of a reform of the electoral system was raised. The need for answers to questions on its operation and consequences became more and more urgent, especially following each election. After the 1965 reform of the electoral map, the differences in representation between rural areas and urban centres were reduced. However, this observation can be cross checked with the results obtained in the 1966 general elections where the Union Nationale with 40.8% of the votes formed the government (56 of 108 seats); the Québec Liberal Party with 47.3% of the votes found itself in opposition (50 of the 108 seats); the Rassemblement pour l'Indépendance Nationale with 5.6% of the votes without a seat; the Ralliement National with 3.2% of the votes without a seat; independent candidates who received 3.1% of the vote received 2 seats.[1]

The unforeseeable effects of the voting method sometimes render the electoral map inadequate.

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[1] Report of the Chief Electoral Officer. The 1966 Elections. Official Returns. 5 June 1966.

IV - 1966 - 1970: the government under Daniel Johnson and Jean-Jacques Bertrand.

The distortions in representation following the elections of June 1966 revived opposition to and questions about one-ballot majority voting. The presence of multiparty politics on the Québec scene contributed to this renewed questioning of the voting method.

By 1967, experts and organizations were interested by the phenomena and effects of the voting method. The reasons why were sought out; solutions were proposed. For example, the Association canadienne française pour l'avancement des sciences (A.C.F.A.S.), organized a conference in Sherbrooke during which Denis DeBelleval proposed that the majority voting method be reformed and replaced by a form of proportional representation plus.[1]

The political parties formulated their positions and undertook in their party programmes to reform the electoral system. For example, the Parti Québécois in 1968-69, during its first convention, mentioned reform of the voting method to ensure greater representation of voters' choices and greater fairness to the political parties. It proposed the establishment of a presidential system.[2] Beginning in 1981, other political parties have also suggested reform of the voting method in their electoral platforms.[3, 4]

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1 DeBelleval, Denis. "Un nouveau système électoral pour le Québec". Communication au congrès de l'A.C.F.A.S., Sherbrooke, November 1967.

2 The Parti Québécois platform, 1968.

3 The Québec Liberal Party platform, 1981.

4 The Union Nationale platform, 1981.

V - 1970 - 1976: the government under Robert Bourassa

The results of the 29 April 1970 general elections gave rise to vigorous opposition to and comments on the voting method, and led the government to consider reform.

On 11 June 1970, the government gave the Standing Committee of the National Assembly the mandate to study electoral reform. The Prime Minister considered it advisable to confer on the Committee the mandate of drawing up overall guidelines to act as the basis for reform proposals. The reform of the electoral system was the subject of debate in the Parliamentary Committees.[1]

On 23 September 1970, the Parti Québécois published a paper in which it proposed a mixed proportional representation system, a single and modernized election act, an electoral map, the use of voting machines and the protection of a citizen's right to stand for election.[2]

Hasty reform was not desired; the Prime Minister wanted to have on hand the recommendations of the Committee and more precise data on the problem. Numerous experts were invited to come and express their views before the members on the electoral system. John Meisel, a professor at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario cautioned the Committee about the use of this advice since experts could stand in the way of such reform because, so he said, they had the power to convince the members to adopt this or that system. In Professor Meisel's opinion, it was for the electorate, the members, and for the political system to define the goals of reform and not up to the experts. In no known case, could or can anyone foresee the consequences of reform on the electoral system.[3]

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[1] Journal of the Debates, 19 December 1970. Page 2622.

[2] Parti Québécois working paper. Le système électoral. September 1970.

[3] Journal of the Debates, 20 May 1971. Page B-1499

Jean Maynard submitted that the only thing that could be said, without mistake, was that it was exceedingly difficult to transplant in one country a system in place in another because the political culture, the special features of its institutions and all the economic and social conditions of that society must be considered.[1]

Jean-Charles Bonenfant proposed that 30 members be elected from a polling list for the entire province and that 90 other members be elected in single-member ridings on the basis of a majority vote.[2]

Vincent Lemieux presented his own proposal that he called "regional moderate proportional representation" that would divide Québec into between 20 and 30 regional electoral divisions, each electing between 3 and 5 members. Lemieux was of the view that reform should be carried out by taking into consideration the ideas, hesitations or favourable attitudes that the public may have toward such reforms.[3]

Gilles Lalande of the Université de Montréal defended the present system of single-member, one-ballot majority voting.[4]

Numerous and diverse proposals were heard. No consensus was reached as to which solution was the most appropriate for Québec, but most agreed that:

> (translation)
> "the primary cause of the distortions that are strongly felt today is the voting method. The map is a secondary cause in that it accentuates and amplifies the consequences of the effects of the voting method."[5]

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1 Journal of the Debates, 25 March 1971. Pages 773-74-75.

2 Journal of the Debates, 18 March 1971. Pages B-710,11-12.

3 Journal of the Debates, 1 April 1971. Pages B-806-810, 812, 813, 821.

4 Journal of the Debates, 27 May 1971. Pages 1694 to 1702.

5 Journal of the Debates, 28 November 1972. Pages 2818-19.

The voting method does not adequately represent all current trends in society.

The opposition requested that the Standing Committee of the National Assembly submit the matter for review by a Study Committee. It was suggested that a working group made up of experts be created to make precise recommendations within six months on the possibility of introducing elements of proportional representation into the electoral system. This committee was formed in the Fall of 1971. Because the issue of the voting method is complex, the government believed that the then state of electoral reform required it to act only with respect to the electoral map. The ultimate orientation of reform of the voting method remained to be found.[1]

Officially, on a motion of the government on 25 November 1971, the Standing Committee of the National Assembly set up a Study Committee to examine in depth the voting method and to submit practical solutions to the Assembly. This group was made up of Vincent Lemieux, François Drouin, Gilles Lalande and Jean Meynaud.

On 21 June 1972, the Study Committee submitted its report after eight working sessions. The report did not lead to any political decision. It advanced no firm position and made no formal recommendations. The report described the major electoral systems found in the world. It was believed that an exhaustive study of the issues was required. The Committee awaited another mandate to do this so that the next time it could propose practical options.[2]

On 30 November 1972, the leader of the opposition party Unité-Québec, Gabriel Loubier, tabled a bill before the National Assembly to amend the Election Act and the voting method.[3] The government considered the bill out of order because it necessitated government expenditure and also because an opposition member could not table a bill that required spending government funds.

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[1] Journal of the Debates, 12 July 1971. Pages 3567-68.

[2] Preliminary Report on Voting. June 1972.

[3] Journal of the Debates, 30 November 1972. Pages 2873-74.

As the committee's report did not add any new element likely to orient reform of the voting method in a given direction, the Standing Committee of the National Assembly decided to split up the two reforms. Only the reform of the electoral map was carried out because of the importance and urgency of redrawing the electoral map before the end of 1972 so that it could be in place in 1974.[1]

In the National Assembly, Prime Minister Robert Bourassa argued for prudence and spoke of the principle of governmental stability, which he said was precarious under proportional voting.[2] The government was not convinced that revamping the electoral system into one based on proportional representation was the solution. The studies undertaken by the Standing Committee were not sufficiently detailed to proceed with an in-depth reform of the voting method.[3]

On a government motion of 21 March 1973, the Standing Committee of the National Assembly formed a second study committee whose mandate was to study the preliminary report submitted in June 1972 by the Committee of Experts in order to report on that report.[4] In fact, this committee never proceeded. Only questions concerning the financing and legal recognition of political parties retained the interest of the Assembly until 25 September 1973.[5]

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1 Journal of the Debates, November 30, 1972. Pages 2901-02.

2 Journal of the Debates, December 7,8, 1972. Pages B-7070.

3 Journal of the Debates, December 14, 1972. Page 3233.

4 Journal of the Debates, March 21, 1973. Page B-7

5 Ducasse, Russell. Le mode de scrutin au Québec. 1983. Page 11

After the general elections of 13 October 1973, the Prime Minister believed that a system of proportional representation would give rise to political instability in Québec.[1]

In 1976, the Québec Liberal Party proposed in its electoral platform to maintain the present voting method which, in its view, avoided problems in Québec with the stability of political institutions.[2]

VI - 1976 - 1983: The government under René Lévesque

The 15 November 1976 general elections in Québec brought the Parti Québécois to power. When it took over, the new government created a new department, the Ministère de la Réforme électorale et parlementaire with Robert Burns as Minister. This department was created in response to the commitment in the Parti Québécois' electoral platform (1968) to reform the method of voting.

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1 Report of the Chief Returning Officer. The 1973 Official Election Returns. 29 October 1973.

2 The Québec Liberal Party. Platform 1976. Page 22.

During the Fall of 1976, Burns was assigned both a general and specific mandates, specifically to reopen the study on voting methods mothballed in 1973. A working group was formed that became the Office of the General Secretary of Electoral Reform and was associated with the Executive Council and with the Office of the Minister of State for Electoral and Parliamentary Reform.

In 1978, the Parti Québécois' electoral platform, in connection with the voting method, was:

(translation)

"that the present method be retained but that an element of proportional representation be added...(2/3 - 1/3)."[1]

Burns consulted the elected members on both sides of the Assembly. During June 1978, the newspaper Le Devoir disclosed a memorandum that Robert Burns, Minister of State for Electoral and Parliamentary Reform, supposedly presented to the Cabinet.[2, 3]

In the Fall of 1978, the Québec government asked Vincent Lemieux, a Laval University professor, to conduct a study on the role of members and on the methods of representation of the electorate in the National Assembly. A poll revealed that less than 26% of Québecers were in favour of a change in the method of voting.[4, 5]

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1 Parti Québecois, Programme électoral. 1978. Page 9.

2 Descoteaux, Bernard. "Le mode de scrutin: Le gouvernement péquiste saura-t-il corriger l'injustice qu'il dénonçait." In Le Devoir, 8 August 1978.

3 Lesage, Gilles. "Une réforme électorale inachevée." In Le Soleil, 9 May 1981.

4 Le rôle du député et les modes de représentation des citoyens de l'Assemblée nationale. Opinion Poll of l'Institut National de Cueillette de l'Information, 1978.

5 Lesage, Gilles. "Réforme du mode de scrutin: conservatisme de l'électorat". In Le Soleil, 7 April 1979.

On 4 November 1978, Burns went to the Federal Republic of Germany to conduct a first-hand study of the operation of its electoral system.[1] The practical applications of the working documents of the Minister of State were studied.

Finally, a Green Paper on electoral reform was tabled in the National Assembly on 24 April 1979:[2]

> "The Conseil des ministres, in giving the ministre d'État à la Réforme électorale et parlementaire a mandate to study and analyse the possibilities for a reform of the electoral system, established what it considers to be the four major objectives to be attained, given the Québec situation." These objectives are:
>
> 1. to eliminate or diminish the distortion between the proporion of the popular vote received by the parties and their proportion of the seats;
>
> 2. to help ensure governmental stability;
>
> 3. to establish some element of regional representation;
>
> 4. to ensure the democratic nature of the lists.[3]

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[1] Bennett, Paul. "Les députés seront élus selon la proportion des suffrages exprimés". In Le Soleil, 28 October 1978.

[2] Lesage, Gilles. "Burns réussira-t-il à vendre sa réforme?" In Le Devoir, 25 April 1979.

[3] Burns, Robert. "One citizen, one vote". Green Paper on the Reform of the Electoral System. Gouvernement du Québec. Éditeur officiel. April 1979. Page 37.

At the end of the Green Paper, Robert Burns concluded:

> "When the basic institutions of democracy and the fundamental rights of citizens are affected, it is clearer than ever that it is they who should decide."

In May 1979, Mr. Burns consulted the public in Rimouski, Sainte-Marie, Longueuil and Joliette. This public consultation, while imperfect and incomplete, permitted the authorities to more accurately determine the reaction of the electorate. On 8 August 1979, Robert Burns announced his retirement for personal reasons from active political life.

On 21 September 1979, during the course of a cabinet shuffle, the Prime Minister separated the parliamentary from electoral issues. Responsibility for parliamentary issues was given to the Speaker of the National Assembly, Clément Richard. The responsibility for electoral reform fell to the member from Chicoutimi, Marc-André Bédard, Minister of Justice, and Chairman of the Legislation Committee.[2]

The reform of the voting method was officially deferred to after the 1981 general elections.[3]

The general elections of 13 April 1981 held the attention of the Assembly, the political parties and of the electorate.

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[1] Burns, Robert. "One citizen, one vote". Green Paper on the Reform of the Electoral System. Gouvernement du Québec, Éditeur officiel. April 1979. Page 113.

[2] Library of the Legislature. Bulletin. Volume II, Nos. 3, 4, October - December 1981. Assemblée nationale du Québec.

[3] Parliamentary Commission. 16 June 1980. Page B-14901.

In September 1981, the newspaper Le Devoir noted that the Minister of State for Electoral Reform, Marc-André Bédard, had submitted to the Cabinet a proposal for reform of the voting method. This proposal, according to Le Devoir, excluded the idea of a mixed system and let it be understood that consultations with the regional caucuses of the Parti Québécois would be be held in order to draft a bill so that reform would be in place for the next elections.

The Executive Council of the Parti Québécois favoured a formula that it called regional compensatory proportional representation.

In April 1982, it was disclosed that the Minister responsible for electoral reform, Marc-André Bédard, was to make public the consultation papers that contained, according to Gilles Lesage of the newspaper Le Devoir, two hypotheses for reform:

1. regional compensatory proportional representation;
2. regional moderate proportional representation, with 29 ridings.[2]

These papers were made public in June 1982.

In the Fall of 1982, Gilles Lesage in Le Devoir stated that a reform bill, in the nature of regional moderate proportional representation, was in preparation.[3, 4]

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[1] Picard, Jean-Claude. "Le prochain scrutin au Québec sera en partie proportionnel". In Le Devoir, 9 September 1981. Page 1.

[2] Lesage, Gilles. "Le gouvernement reporte la consultation sur le projet de réforme du mode de scrutin". In Le Devoir, 20 April 1982.

[3] Gauthier, Gilles. "Québec opte pour la représentation proportionnelle régionale modérée". In La Presse, 3 September 1982.

[4] Lesage, Gilles. "Québec ajouterait une représentation proportionnelle régionale modérée au mode de scrutin uninominal". In Le Devoir, 30 July 1982.

In March 1983, the newspaper Le Soleil indicated that the Cabinet would opt for the paper on regional moderate proportional representation presented by the Minister of State for Electoral Reform.[1] On 22 June 1983, on a motion of the Prime Minister, the National Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution to confer upon the Commission de la représentation électorale du Québec the mandate to proceed to hold public hearings on the voting method and to report to the National Assembly by 22 February 1984[2,3]. Before holding public hearings, the Commission thought it advisable to poll the opinion of Québecers on any change in the voting method (Étude de notoriété et de perception - le mode de scrutin. 11 August 1983).

The executive of the governing party submitted a proposal different from the formula preferred by the government;[4] the Québec Liberal Party rejected the government proposal of regional moderate proportional representation. Public hearings on reform commenced on 3 October 1983 and ended on 21 December 1983. Many Québecers spoke up and numerous proposals were submitted to the members of the Commission.

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1 Lacombe, Réjean. "La formule prônée par Bédard serait retenue". In Le Soleil, 8 March 1983. Page A-3.

2 Rheault, Ghislaine. "Une Commission pour la réforme du mode de scrutin". In Le Soleil, 23 June 1983. Page A-5.

3 Bill 41. An act to amend the Act respecting electoral representation (1983, Chapter 36). Assented to 22 June 1983.

4 Canadian Press. "Réforme électorale du PQ. Le Conseil national rejette l'idée de Bédard". In La Voix de l'Est, 12 December 1983. Page 11.

5 Bernier, Gilles. "La formule proposée est rejetée par les libéraux". In Le Droit, 16 December 1983. Page 40.

On 21 December 1983, before adjournment of the session, the National Assembly unanimously approved a motion of the Prime Minister that gave the Commission de la représentation électorale one additional month to deliver its report.

At the end of March 1984, the Commission tabled its report.

SCHEDULE B

ENABLING LEGISLATION

Bill 41 (sanctioned on June 22, 1983)

Motion of the Prime Minister (June 22, 1983)

Resolution of the National Assembly (June 22, 1983)

Resolution of the National Assembly (December 21, 1983)

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE — FOURTH SESSION

Bill 41

An Act to amend the Act respecting electoral representation

(1983, Chapter 36)

1st reading 22 June 1983
2nd reading 22 June 1983
3rd reading 22 June 1983

Amended to 22 June 1983

Québec Official Publisher
1983

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The object of this bill is to amend the Act respecting electoral representation in order to add to the functions of the Commission de la représentation, that of carrying out any mandate that the National Assembly may entrust to it.

A further object of the bill is to postpone to 13 April 1985 the time limit in effect, pursuant to the Act, for consulting the Members of the National Assembly and interested individuals and organizations, following the report on the boundaries of the electoral divisions tabled in the national Assembly on 13 April 1983.

Bill 41

An Act to amend the Act
respecting electoral representation

THE PARLIAMENT OF QUÉBEC ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. Section 2 of the Act respecting electoral representation (R.S.Q., chapter R-24.1) is amended by adding, after the second paragraph, the following paragraph:

"The Commission shall also carry out any other mandate that the National Assembly, on a motion of the Prime Minister, may entrust to it."

2. Section 46 of the said Act is replaced by the following section:

"**46.** The sums required for the administration of this Act, as well as for the carrying out of any mandate entrusted to the Commission by the National Assembly, are taken out of the consolidated revenue fund."

3. The time limit in effect pursuant to section 27 of the said Act for consulting the Members of the National Assembly and interested individuals and organizations, following the submission of the report to the National Assembly on 13 April 1983, is postponed to 13 April 1985.

4. This Act shall operate notwithstanding the provisions of Sections 2 and 7 to 15 of the Constitution Act, 1982 (Schedule B of the Canada Act, Chapter 11 in the 1982 volume of the Acts of the Parliament of the United Kingdom).

5. This Act comes into force on the day of its sanction.

MOTION proposing that be entrusted to the Commission de la représentation the study of different formulae of reform of the polling method.

WHEREAS on several occasions and most particularly in the last inaugural message of the present session, the government has shown its desire to proceed with an evaluation of the present polling method and a study of the different formulae which could serve to modify or replace it.

WHEREAS in such matters, it is preferable to have the consensus of the members of the National Assembly;

WHEREAS the broad orientations concerning this question must be established in the most objective manner possible;

WHEREAS the Commission de la représentation is an institution, the members of which were unanimously appointed by the National Assembly;

WHEREAS its mandate is already linked to the polling method and it has particular competence in this field;

WHEREAS the Commission de la représentation is thus the obvious medium to study and gather opinions on the formulae proposed to reform the polling method and to submit enlightened conclusions to the members of the National Assembly;

WHEREAS the National Assembly wants to act as quickly as possible.

IT IS DECREED, on recommendation of the Prime Minister:

THAT, in accordance with paragraph 3 of Section 2 of the Act respecting electoral representation, the Commission de la représentation be entrusted with evaluating the present polling method and the study of the different formulae for reform of the polling method;

THAT, for the purposes of this mandate the Commission, in close contact with the members of the National Assembly, interested citizens and organizations:

- Take the necessary measures to inform them;
- Consult and gather their opinions publicly or in camera;
- After having given notice thereof, hold public hearings in the various regions of Québec;
- Study their representations as well as any other aspect linked to its mandate;

THAT the Commission, within eight months, hand in a report to the National Assembly comprising a detailed analysis, including the advantages and disadvantages of the present polling method, the different formulae suggested and, should the occasion arise, its own recommendations.

THAT the Commission, in carrying out its mandate, may have recourse to resource persons of the Civil Service.

Translation of the official text of the Motion adopted by the National Assembly, June 22, 1983. Official text extracted from the Journal des Débats de l'Assemblée nationale, Wednesday, June 22, 1983, V. 27, No. 43.

RESOLUTION

" *That*, in accordance with the third paragraph of section 2 of the Act respecting electoral representation (R.S.Q., c. R-24.1), the Commission de la représentation be entrusted with evaluating the present electoral process and examining the various methods for reform of the voting system;

That for the purposes of this mandate, the Commission, shall, as regards the Members of the National Assembly, and interested individuals and organizations:
— take the necessary informational measures;
— hold consultations and record opinions publicly or in camera;
— hold public hearings in the various regions of Québec, after giving due notice thereof;
— consider representations made to it and any other matter relating to its mandate;

That, within eight months, the Commission shall report to the National Assembly a detailed analysis, including the advantages and disadvantages of the present polling system and of the different proposals put forward and, where applicable, make recommendations;

That the Commission, in fulfilling its mandate, shall have recourse to resource persons in the Civil Service."

Translation of the Resolution of the National Assembly, June 22, 1983, extracted from " Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly", Fourth Session, 32nd Legislature, no 43, page 371.

RESOLUTION

"*Whereas* the National Assembly has entrusted the Commission de la représentation électorale with a mandate to evaluate the present electoral process and to examine the various methods for reform of the voting system;

Whereas a resolution was passed unanimously for that purpose on 22 June 1983;

Whereas such resolution provides that the Commission shall report to the National Assembly within eight months, by 22 February 1984;

Whereas the Commission has changed the timetable it had drawn up for the carrying out of its mandate, in order to allot more days to public hearings owing to the great number of briefs presented;

Whereas the Commission is unable to report to the National Assembly within the appointed time; and

Whereas it is expedient to extend the time granted to the Commission;

Ordered, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister:

That the time prescribed for the tabling of the report be extended to 30 March 1984."

Translation of the Resolution of the National Assembly, December 21, 1983, extracted from "Votes and Proceedings of the National Assembly", Fourth Session, 32nd Legislature, no 68, pages 564-565.

SCHEDULE C

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

A.F.E.A.S., région de l'Abitibi/Témiscamingue
Bernard, Doris, 2° vice-prés.
A.F.E.A.S., région du Bas-St-Laurent
Gagné Lepage, Simonne, prés.
A.F.E.A.S., région de la Mauricie
Roberge, Thérèse, resp.
A.F.E.A.S., région de Nicolet
A.F.E.A.S., région de Sept-Iles
Murray, Jocelyne, prés. ex-officio
ALLIANCE CÔTE-NORD, SEPT-ILES
Laflamme, Marguerite, prés.
ALLIE, Robert
AMIS DE LA TERRE, LES
Jurdant, Michel
ARCHDIOCESE OFFICE OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, MONTREAL
Onshinow, Vitaly
ASSOCIATION LIBÉRALE PROVINCIALE D'OUTREMONT
Normand, Joachim, prés.
ASSOCIATION DES COMMISSIONS SCOLAIRES D'ABITIBI/TÉMISCAMINGUE
Labelle, Noella, prés.
ASSOCIATION DES ÉTUDIANTS DU CEGEP DE RIMOUSKI
Galant, Charles
ASSOCIATION DES ÉTUDIANTS EN GÉOGRAPHIE DE L'UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL
Dufresne, Claudine, représentante
Jeanson, Sylviane, membre
ASSOCIATION POUR LES DROITS DES GAIS ET LESBIENNES DU QUÉBEC (ADGLQ)
ASSOCIATION TRIFLUVIENNE POUR UNE ÉCOLE ALTERNATIVE
Pellerin, Hélène, membre
Charland, Denis, prés.
BEAUDOIN, Josaphat
BÉDARD, Carole
BÉDARD, Marc-André, ministre de la Justice du Québec
BÉGIN, Gérard, maire du Village de la Patrie
BELLAVANCE, Michel, professeur
BERGERON, André
BERNARD, André, professeur
BISAILLON, Guy, député
BLOUIN, René, député
BOILY, Robert, professeur
BOIVIN, Dominique,
BOKOR, Dr Alexandre V.
BOSHOUWERS, Harry
BOURASSA, Michel
BOYCE, Dominic
BRAUNER, Bubi
BRIEN, Jean-Marie
BROSSARD, Jacques, professeur

CAOUETTE, Gilles
CARON, Fernand
CARON, Maurice
CARREFOUR DES FEMMES DU GRAND LACHUTE, LE
    Hurtubise, Andrée
C.E.Q.
    Gagnon, Alice, vice-prés.
    Agnaieff, Michel, dir.-gén.
    Laberge, Henri, employé conseil
CENTRE DE RECHERCHE EN MÉTAPHYSIQUE APPLIQUÉE «Un village planétaire»
    Sénécal, Lior, coordonnateur
CENTRE DE RENCONTRE ARC-EN-CIEL
    Massicotte, Simonne, responsable
CENTRE INTERNATIONAL ET MULTICULTUREL DE L'ESTRIE
    Saine, Dr Georges, trés.
CERMAKIAN, Jean, professeur
CHAMBRE DE COMMERCE DE LA PROVINCE DE QUÉBEC
    Létourneau, Jean-Paul, vice-prés. exécutif
CHAMBRE DE COMMERCE DE RIMOUSKI
    Desrosiers, Gaston, prés.
CHAMBRE DE COMMERCE DE SHERBROOKE
    Simard, Patrice, prés.
CHAMBRE DE COMMERCE DE TROIS-RIVIÈRES
    Beaudry, Robert, prés.
CHAMPAGNE-GILBERT, Maurice
CHARBONNEAU, Honorius
CHÂTILLON, Gilles
CHEVALIERS DE COLOMB DE RIGAUD, LES
    D'Aoust, Léo, Grand Chevalier
CITOYENS PLUS, BEAUCE-APPALACHES
    Poulin, Rita, prés.
CLUB AMITIÉ ST-SACREMENT INC.
    Langlois, Simone B., prés.
CLUB DES 50 ET PLUS (ÂGE D'OR) DE GRANBY
    Demers, Armand, représentant
CLUB DE L'ÂGE D'OR DE ST-FRÉDÉRIC-DE-BEAUCE
    Roy, Marie-Paule G., sec.-trés.
COMITÉ D'ACTION POLITIQUE DES FEMMES DU PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS
    Marcoux, Lyne
    Bastien, Claudette
COMITÉ D'ACTION SOCIALE DE SAINTE-MARIE
    Bourgault, Marie-Céline
    Charbonneau, Céline
    Soucy, Marcel
COMITÉ D'ALPHABÉTISATION DU BAS-ST-LAURENT
    Lebel, Noëlla, sec.
COMITÉ DE L'ÂGE D'OR DE ST-CHARLES-DE-BEAUCE
    Nadeau, H. prés.
COMITÉ DE LÉGISLATION DE LA CORPORATION DES OFFICIERS MUNICIPAUX AGRÉÉS DU QUÉBEC
    Fafard, Jean, o.m.a., prés.
COMITÉ DES CITOYENS DE PORT-CARTIER
    Michaud, Benoit, trés.
COMITÉ POUR CHANGER LE SYSTÈME DE VOTE
    Bisaillons, Claude

COMITÉ RÉGIONAL DE L'ESTRIE DU MOUVEMENT SOCIALISTE
Gravel, Jean-Paul
Nadeau, Daniel
COMITÉ RÉGIONAL DE LA MAURICIE DU MOUVEMENT SOCIALISTE
Godbout, François
COMITÉ RÉGIONAL DE MONTRÉAL DU MOUVEMENT SOCIALISTE
Couillard, Robert
Fuyet, Hervé
COMITÉ RÉGIONAL SUR L'ACCESSIBILITÉ DE LANAUDIÈRE
Bonin, Hélène
COMMISSION SCOLAIRE MALARTIC
Rivest, Jacqueline, prés.
CONFÉDÉRATION DES SYNDICATS NATIONAUX (CSN)
Mercille, Pierre, vice-prés.
Galarneau, Ginette
Roy, Louis
CONGRÈS JUIF CANADIEN, RÉGION DE QUÉBEC
Finestone, Bernard J., prés.
Levy, Mayer
Archibald, Dr. dir. gén.
CONGRÈS NATIONAL DES ITALO-CANADIENS
Taddéo, Donat, vice-prés.
Salvatore, Filippo, sec.
CONSEIL DE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE DE LA BAIE-DES-CHALEURS
Gasse, Daniel, agent par intérim
CONSEIL DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX DE L'OUTAOUAIS (CSSSO)
Hutton, Géraldine, dir.-gén.
CONSEIL DU PATRONAT DE QUÉBEC
Dufour, Ghislain, vice-prés. exécutif
CONSEIL DU STATUT DE LA FEMME
Bonenfant, Claire, prés.
Powers, Marie-Élizabeth, dir. des communications
CONSEIL DU TRAVAIL DE L'ESTRIE
Rousseau, Yvon, prés.
Leblanc, Réjean
Ouellet, Robert
CONSEIL DU TRAVAIL DE L'OUTAOUAIS QUÉBÉCOIS
Fortin, Lise, prés.
CONSEIL DU TRAVAIL DE MONTRÉAL
Cousineau, Guy, sec. gén.
CONSEIL ÉCONOMIQUE DE RIMOUSKI
Bérubé, Pierre, prés.
CONSEIL EXÉCUTIF DE L'ASSOCIATION DES FEMMES COLLABORATRICES
Blanchette, Denise, coord.
CONSEIL EXÉCUTIF NATIONAL DU PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS
Simard, Sylvain, vice-prés.
Milner, Henri
Brouilly, Pierre
CONSEIL EXÉCUTIF DU PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS DE BOURGET
Girard, Raymond, prés.
CONSEIL EXÉCUTIF DU PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS DE CHICOUTIMI
Lavoie-Tremblay, Carole, prés.
CONSEIL MUNICIPAL DE DOLBEAU
Ouellet, Jaquelin, délégué

CONSEIL RÉGIONAL DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DE LANAUDIÈRE, JOLIETTE
Granger, Roland, prés.
CONSEIL RÉGIONAL DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DE L'EST DU QUÉBEC, RIMOUSKI
Vaillancourt, Benoit
CONSEIL RÉGIONAL DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DE L'ESTRIE (CRDE), SHERBROOKE
Flahaut, Jacques, prés.
Fortin, Roch
Fortin, J-Clément
CONSEIL RÉGIONAL DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DE L'OUTAOUAIS
Gauthier, De Sale, dir. gén.
Larocque, Raoul, prés.
CONSEIL RÉGIONAL DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DU SAGUENAY/LAC-ST-JEAN
Fortin, Louis-Gaétan, dir. gén.
Tremblay, J.-F., prés.
CONSEIL RÉGIONAL DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX DE L'ESTRIE (CRSSS)
Painchaud, Albert, dir. gén.
CONSEIL RÉGIONAL DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX DE TROIS-RIVIÈRES (CRSSS)
Quintin, Paul-André, prés.
CONSEIL RÉGIONAL ET EXÉCUTIF DU PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE
Bégin, Paul, prés.
Gingras, André, vice-prés.
CONSEIL RÉGIONAL DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT DU SAGUENAY/LAC-ST-JEAN/CHIBOUGAMAU
Pagé, Claire, sec.-gén.
CONSEIL RÉGIONAL DU PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS, RÉGION BAS-ST-LAURENT- GASPÉSIE, ILES DE LA MADELEINE, Rimouski
Dionne, Jacques
CONSEIL RÉGIONAL DU PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS, RÉGION BAS-ST-LAURENT- GASPÉSIE, ILES DE LA MADELEINE, Gaspé
Crête, Paul, vice-prés.
CONSEIL RÉGIONAL DU PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS, RÉGION DE MAURICIE/ BOIS-FRANCS
Vachon, Guy, prés.
Leblanc, Roseline, vice-prés.
CORMIER, Serge, étudiant
CORPORATION DE DÉVELOPPEMENT TOURISTIQUE DE LA MATAPÉDIA
Caron, Diane, dir.
CORPORATION MUNICIPALE DE DENHOLM
Thériault, Luc, maire
Sabourin, Denise, sec.-trés.
COULOMBE, H.
COUPEY, H.
COURCHESNES, Alphonse, recherchiste
COUTURE, Réal-Jean
DALLAIRE, H. Lorenzo
D'AMOURS, Joël, étudiant
DE BELLEFEUILLE, Pierre, député
DE DENUS, Jean, professeur
DORAY, Raymond, avocat
DOUESNARD, John
DUSSAULT, Roland, député
DUTIL, Robert, maire
EXÉCUTIF DU PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS, CIRCONSCRIPTION ÉLECTORALE DE CRÉMAZIE
Lachapelle, Guy

EXÉCUTIF DU PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS DE LA RÉGION DE L'OUTAOUAIS
Soulières, Jacques, prés. rég.
Saey, Normand, cons.
Villeneuve, Marcel, cons.
EXÉCUTIF DU PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS DU COMTÉ DE SHERBROOKE
Leclerc, Roger, prés.
EXÉCUTIF NATIONAL DE L'UNION NATIONALE
Fecteau, Pauline
Leblanc, Louis
FÉDÉRATION DES FEMMES DU QUÉBEC, MONTRÉAL
Rochon, Denise, prés.
Adam, Ann
Boily, Nicole
FÉDÉRATION DES FEMMES DU QUÉBEC, CONSEIL RÉGIONAL DE QUÉBEC
Dumont, Ginette, prés.
FÉDÉRATION DES FEMMES DU QUÉBEC, SAGUENAY
Dubé, Antoinette
Vaillancourt, Marthe
FÉDÉRATION DE L'U.P.A. DE LA GASPÉSIE
Lapointe, Hermel, prés.
FÉDÉRATION DE L'U.P.A. DU SAGUENAY/LAC-ST-JEAN
Simard, Germain, prés.
FONDATION D'ACTION ET DE SENSIBILISATION POLITIQUE DU QUÉBEC
Boily, Nicole
Boucher, Louise
Marin, Pierre
FONTAINE, Alain
FORTIN, Georges-Henri
FORTIN, Gérald, professeur
FORTIN, Luc, professeur
FORUM DES FEMMES DU SAGUENAY/LAC-ST-JEAN
Boulianne-Ouellet, Pierrette
FRAPPÉ, Laurent
GABOURY, Jean-Pierre, professeur
GAUTHIER, France
GAUVIN, Henri
GIRARD, René, conseiller municipal
GRAND CONSEIL DES CRIS DU QUÉBEC
Awashish, William, chef exécutif
Mianscum, Henri, dir
Grodinsky, William, sec.
GRANGER, Serge, étudiant
GRAVEL, Denis
GROUPE DES RETRAITÉS LETTONS
Waldheims, Jean, représentant
GUIBORD, Gilles
GUIMOND, Jean-Yves, avocat
GUINDON, Jean-Bernard
HARNEY, John, professeur
HÉBERT, Bernard
HÉROUX, Guy
JACQUES, Éric, maire
JEAN, Bruno, professeur
JEUNE CHAMBRE DE RIVIÈRE-DU-LOUP, LA
Pelletier, Gaston, prés.
JOLIVET, Jean-Pierre, député

JOYAL, André, professeur
LACHAÎNE, Jacques, professeur
LAFORCE, Claude
LALONDE, Gilbert
LANDRY, Jacques
LANGLOIS, France
LANGLOIS, Richard
LAPOINTE, Normand
LAURENDEAU, Adrien, professeur
LAUZON, Bernard
LAVOIE, Marie
LAVOIE, Eugène
LAWRENCE, Harvey B.
LÉGARÉ, Gilles
LEMAY, Gilles
LEMIEUX, Vincent, professeur
LE MOIGNAN, Michel, curé
LEVY, Gary
LORIOT, Gérard, professeur
MAISON DES FEMMES DES BOIS-FRANCS INC., COMITÉ DE FINANCEMENT
    Fournier, Sylvie, déléguée
MARSHALL, Hamilton
MASSICOTTE, Louis, politicologue
McCOURT, Carl
MÉTIVIER, Patricia
MINTZBERG, Henry, professeur
MONGEAU, Roland, professeur
MOTARD, André
MOUVEMENT «ACTION-CHÔMAGE» DE TROIS-RIVIÈRES
    Carle, Christine, militante
MOUVEMENT D'ALLIANCE DES JEUNES INDÉPENDANTISTES DU QUÉBEC
    Gagné, Danielle
MUNICIPALITÉ DE LA HAUTE MAURICIE
    Tousignant, Denis, sec.-trés.
MUNICIPALITÉ DE STE-BRIGIDE
    Neveu, Claude
    Lasnier, Jean-Paul
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE DE COMTÉ (MRC) HAUT ST-MAURICE
    Duchesneau, Gaétan, sec.-trés.
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE DE COMTÉ (MRC) KAMOURASKA
    Lavoie, Guy, sec.-trés.
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE DE COMTÉ (MRC) LA MITIS, RIMOUSKI
    Gaudreault, Léon, préfet
MUSIL, A.
NOREAU, Pierre
OUELLET, Andrée
OUELLETTE, Jocelyne
OUIMET, Laurent
P., J. citoyen de Brigham
PARTI ALTERNATIF DU QUÉBEC
    Roquebrune, Yves, chef du parti

PARTI LIBÉRAL DU QUÉBEC
Pagé, Michel, député
Côté, Marc-Yvan, député
Mailloux, Raymond, député
PARTI NATIONALISTE HUMAIN DU QUÉBEC
Lapointe, René-Lucien, chef
PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS DU DISTRICT ÉLECTORAL DE ST-FRANÇOIS
Turcotte, René Me, prés.
Dionne, Jean
Messier, Hélène
PARTI RÉPUBLICAIN DU QUÉBEC
Rochon, Paul
PATENAUDE, Pierre, professeur
PATRY, Maurice, professeur
PELLETIER, Réjean, professeur
PERRIER, Onil
PERRON, Alain, professeur
PERRON, Denis, député
PERRON, François
PETERMAN, Denis
PIETTE, Jacques
PION, René
PLAMONDON, Denise
POIRIER, Richard
POMERLEAU, Nicolas
RASSEMBLEMENT DES CITOYENS ET CITOYENNES DE MONTRÉAL
Melançon, Pierre-Yves, cons. mun.
RASSEMBLEMENT POPULAIRE DE QUÉBEC
Frohn, Winnie
Mainguy, Pierre
Hébert, Gilles
Gélinas, Michel
REGROUPEMENT DES AVEUGLES ET AMBLYOPES DU QUÉBEC
Larose, Jacques, prés.
RÉMILLARD, Jean
RENAUD, Laurier, professeur
RÉSEAU D'ACTION ET D'INFORMATION POUR LES FEMMES (R.A.I.F.)
Therrien, Micheline
Dolment, Marcelle
RIVARD, H.
ROBERGE, Charles, avocat
ROBERT, Gaby
ROCHEFORT, Jacques, député
RONDEAU, Jean-François, ingénieur
SAKIME, L. Carrie B.
SALVAS, François
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SIMONNET, Joël
SIROIS, Yvon
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Lachance, Jocelyn, dir. gén.
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Bélanger, Jules, prés.

SOCIÉTÉ NATIONALE DE L'EST DU QUÉBEC
Jean, Ghislain, prés.
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Beauvais, Réjean, prés.
SOCIÉTÉ NATIONALE DES QUÉBÉCOIS DE LA CAPITALE
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Castonguay, Charles, adm.
Joanis, Jean, adm.
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Lavigne, Jean-Denis, cons.
THIBAULT, André
TREMBLAY, Alain, avocat
TREMBLAY, Hélène
TRÉPANIER, Paul-O.
TURCOTTE, Brigitte
UNION DES ÉCRIVAINS QUÉBÉCOIS
Collette, Jean-Yves, sec.-gén.
UNION DES MUNICIPALITÉS DU QUÉBEC
UNIVERSITÉ DU TROISIÈME ÂGE
Bergmann, Jeannine
VAUGEOIS, Denis, député
VILLE DE BÉCANCOUR
Richard, Maurice, maire
VILLE DE HULL
Migneault, Cartier, conseiller
Careau, André
Cholette, Pierre
Lacroix, André
VILLE DE NEW-RICHMOND
Jobin, Jean-Marie, maire
VILLE DE TROIS-RIVIÈRES
Lamy, Jean, greffier
WHITE, J.-F.
WILLIAMS, Marc

SCHEDULE D

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE JAMES BAY CREES TO
LA COMMISSION DE LA REPRÉSENTATION ÉLECTORALE DU QUÉBEC

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Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec)
Grand Conseil des Cris (du Québec)

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CREE REGIONAL AUTHORITY
ADMINISTRATION RÉGIONALE CRIE

GCCQ

CRA
ARC

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE JAMES BAY CREES
TO LA COMMISSION DE LA REPRÉSENTATION ÉLECTORALE
DU QUÉBEC

This is the written submission of the James Bay Crees, the Cree bands of Québec, the Cree Regional Authority, and the Grand Council of the Crees (of Québec).

The James Bay Crees are one of the original inhabitants of northern Québec and form a single ethnic and cultural group spreading across the northern part of the province between the 49th and 55th parrallels.

There are eight Cree communities: Mistassini, Waswanipi, Nemaska, Rupert House, Eastmain, Paint Hills, Fort George (Chisasibi), and Great Whale River. As well, there is a significant number of Crees living in non-Cree settlements and villages in the James Bay territory.

You will see from the attached map that the Crees and their eight communities represent a cornerstone in the organization and development of the entire part of the territory in which they live.

(Great Whale River ᐃᐊᒪᐢᑐᐦᐊᐣ) Chisasibi ᒋᓵᓱᐦᐃ Waswanipi ᐅᐚᓂᐲᐦᐃ Eastmain ᐃᔅᑎᒫᐣ Rupert House ᐊᑐᐢᑲᐦᐅᓯ Nemaska ᓇᒪᐢᑲ Waswanipi ᐅᐚᓂᐲᐦᐃ Mistassini ᒥᔅᑕᓱᓂ

These communities are of course permanent and are not set up for relatively short periods of time to implement specific projects.

All of the eight Cree communities have common cultural links, common interests, common needs, have a large community of interests and in light of the provisions of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement and legislation enacted to give effect thereto, are basically governed by a common governmental or para-governmental administration.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

In order to provide for a more efficient implementation of this administration and a more coherent response to their needs, it is essential that all the Cree communities be able to voice their concerns as a group through one member of the National Assembly. The voice of all the Crees in response to current problems should not be diluted.

The communities should at least be able to go directly to a representative in the National Assembly in order to express their needs and exert pressure in order that the problems can be recognized by government.

The James Bay Crees number only about 8,000 persons living across northern Québec.

Under the current electoral system, the Cree communities of northern Québec are not considered as a distinct group or special interest class. Rather, they fall within one of the current electoral districts determined by Québec.

They are faced with the same difficulties with respect to electoral voting as do most minorities.

Their voting power is insufficient to command adequate responses and the possible division of their communities into different districts results iS a further diminution of their political voice.

Their population is, of course, not very large compared to the total population of the current electoral districts, and the Crees wish to ensure that there is an effective way in which the whole Cree population can make its concerns known to its representative in the National Assembly.

Only recently, the Crees were faced with a very practical example of the potential use of their political representative in the federal Parliament to promote their interests.

There had been grave problems regarding the implementation of certain sections of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement and the Crees were able to sensitize their member of Parliament to these concerns.

This was done not despite of the size of the Cree population but rather because of their basic relationship to the entire territory in question, their rights and privileges pursuant to the Agreement and legislation enacted to give effect thereto and the specific ethnic and cultural features of the Crees. The fact that the entire Cree population was in one electoral district was of assistance as well.

The personal involvement and concern of the member of Parliament was no less an asset.

The argument to this member of the federal Parliament that he represents the Crees would be diminished if in fact one community were situated in a separate electoral district. This, of course, is possible.

The corollary to this point is that the one community left out would have had great difficulty in convincing its member of Parliament to actively pursue the interests of the community in light of the small size of the voting population in question.

The above scenario is easily applicable in the case of possible representations to the National Assembly member for one or more of the Cree communities.

Unlike many of the other towns and settlements in northern Québec, the Crees, although disparate, have certain common goals and ambitions. This is a result not only of a social and cultural closeness, but also because of the experience of all the communities in working together towards the achievement of their goals in the past. The James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement is a result of this joint effort.

OUR OPTION - A NATIVE ELECTORAL DISTRICT IN QUÉBEC

Our proposal relates to the long term objectives followed by the Commission with respect to the method of voting, and particularly as it affects the native peoples of northern Québec.

You are of course aware that the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement has been executed between the Cree people of Québec, the Inuit of Québec, and the governments of Canada and of Québec. The Northeastern Québec Agreement was later executed to cover the Naskapis of Schefferville.

The James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement was the climax of a long and intensive effort by the Cree and Inuit people of Québec to preserve their way of life and to have their rights as aboriginal occupants of a large part of northern Québec respected.

The court proceedings surrounding the original proposed James Bay hydroelectric project resulted in a landmark decision of Mr. Justice Malouf of the Superior Court of Québec recognizing the rights of the native peoples in Québec to their land.

Although this judgment was never tested before the Supreme Court of Canada, the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement was negotiated in the interim and has been approved by federal and provincial legislation.

The Crees continue to maintain that the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement is a legislative and constitutional document in itself and is a charter of Cree and Inuit rights.

Copies of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement are filed before this Commission and you will note that the document purports to deal extensively with a large area of different subject matters which concern the James Bay Crees and the Inuit of Québec.

The Agreement reads much like a constitutional charter of a new country and you will realize that it was the intent of both governments and the native peoples to ensure that this agreement enshrined most of the rights and obligations which were under negotiation.

The Agreement basically permitted the Crees and the Inuit to become to a very large extent decision makers of their own future and to allow them to govern their communities and have an important role in the development of lands outside of their communities in the future.

There has been a series of provincial laws adopted in order to give effect to the agreement and to implement specific regimes over the James Bay territory dealing with hunting, fishing and trapping, development, environmental regime, policing, education, health services, governmental and para-governmental activities, and social programs applicable throughout the territory for the Crees and the Inuit.

The Agreement provided a blueprint for the present and future development of the territory in question, fashioned as it was as an agreement with the permanent residents of the area.

The clear result of the agreement and the expectations of both governments and the Crees, the Inuit, and the Naskapis was that the part of northern Québec contemplated by the agreements would be considered as an area under great native influence.

From a geographical, cultural and social point of view, the territory can be seen as an area of common interest for these native peoples of Québec. This is true not only from the Agreement but also from the historical and social perspective.

The proposal of having native representation in the National Assembly has, of course, been proposed before and the Crees are in support of it.

This of course would allow for a distinct voice to be heard with respect to native problems.

This is particularly important in light of the changes to the Canadian constitution, the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement, and the recognition of aboriginal and other native rights.

In the present situation, the Crees believe that there is a very strong case to be made to allow for either the establishment of a native representative to the National Assembly to represent the native

signatories to the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement and the Northeastern Québec Agreement.

Alternatively, we propose the creation of a specific electoral district to cover the native communities in northern Québec contemplated by the Agreements.

Such a decision would be in conformity with the policies established by the Commission, would in fact be a clearer implementation of the mandate of the Commission and would add a confirmation of the intent of Québec to recognize and implement the provisions of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement.

When the Agreement was executed by the governments, there was a clear commitment on the part of all parties that a particular regime would be made applicable to the Crees and the Inuit of northern Québec. The institution of a representative to the National Assembly would confirm this objective on their behalf.

This has been specifically evidenced by the legislation which has been adopted to give effect to the Agreement.

We thus submit the proposal based on the following:

1. From a geographical point of view, the proposal covers an easily describable and logically contained land area which is extremely large compared to other districts because of the sparsity of its population.

2. Socially, culturally, and historically, there is a community of interests with all of the permanent residents of the communities, that is, the natives whose domicile is not dependent upon individual projects but based upon a clear attachment to the land and its resources.

3. From a population point of view, although the total population may be very close to the minimum required by legislation, this is justified in the circumstances in light of the special characteristics of the communities and the permanent status of these people.

4. In regard to government policy, the clear intent and objective of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement and the Northeastern Québec Agreement was to provide for a recognition of the special status of this area of Québec and the native peoples and the establishment of one electoral district to cover all of the native peoples would be in conformity with stated

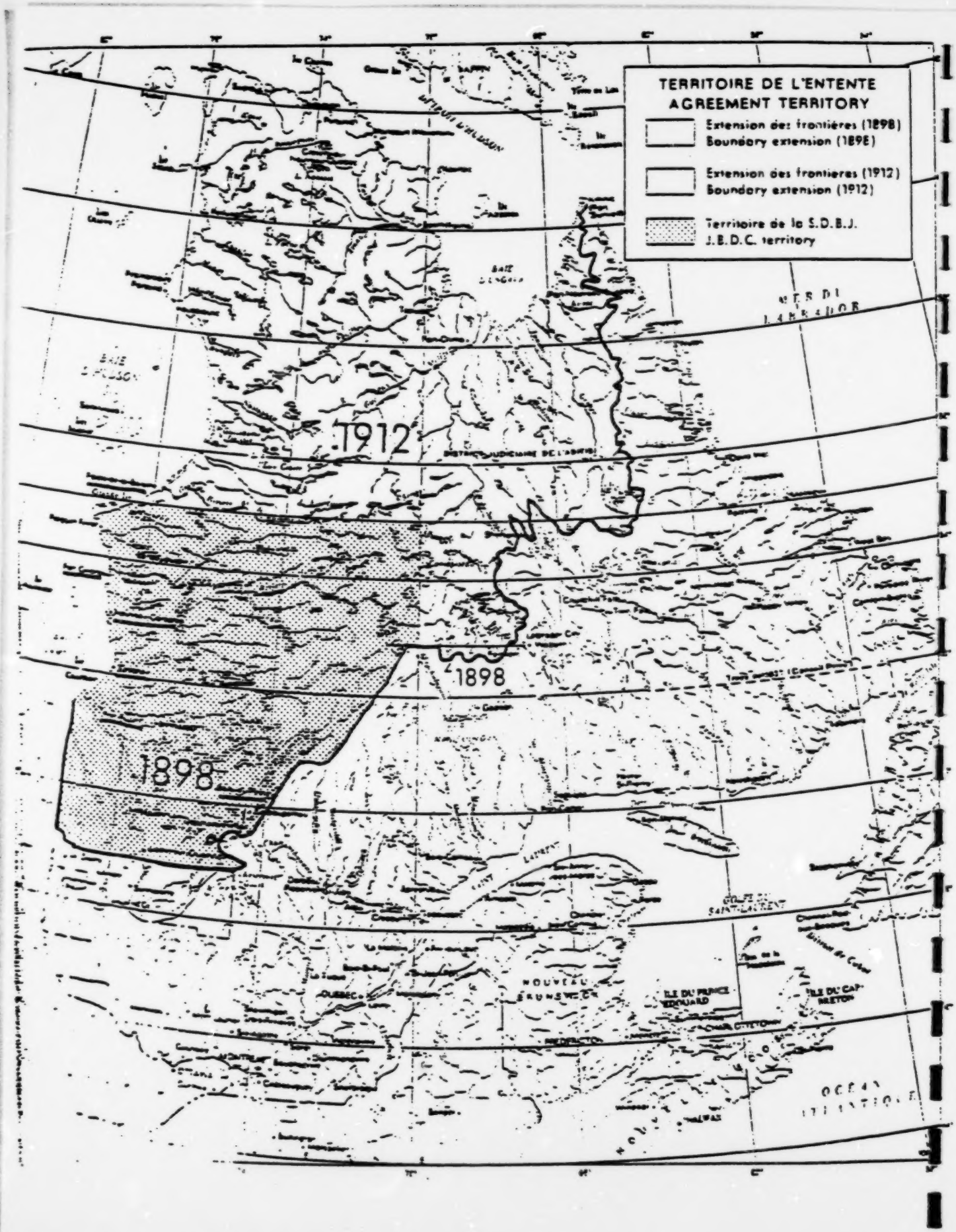
government policy as evidenced by the agreements and legislation enacted to give effect thereto.

CONCLUSION

For all of the reasons outlined above, the Crees recommend that the Commission deal specifically with the proposal for either the institution of a native representative to the National Assembly as described above or the creation of a unique electoral district for the purposes of representation of the Cree, Inuit, and Naskapis of northern Québec in order that they may elect a representative directly to the National Assembly.

Thank you.

November 29, 1983


TERRITOIRE DE L'ENTENTE
AGREEMENT TERRITORY
Extension des frontières (1898)
Boundary extension (1898)
Extension des frontières (1912)
Boundary extension (1912)
Territoire de la S.D.B.J.
J.B.D.C. territory
1912
1898
1898
BAIE D'HUDSON
BAIE D'UNGAVA
DISTRICT JUDICIAIRE DE L'ABITIBI
NOUVEAU BRUNSWICK
QUEBEC
ILE DU PRINCE EDOUARD
ILE DU CAP BRETON
GOLFE DU SAINT-LAURENT
OCEAN ATLANTIQUE

SCHEDULE E

TERRITORIAL PROPORTIONALITY.
TWO HYPOTHESES FOR DEMARCATION OF
THE ELECTORAL MAP.

Introduction

This paper sets out two hypotheses for the demarcation of the Québec electoral map.

These two hypotheses were drawn up in order to test the applicability of the parameters proposed in the Commission's report. The parameters are used in drawing up an electoral map based on territorial proportional representation. These hypotheses also permitted the determination of the effects that the different methods of applying these parameters would have on the map.

1. Parameters for demarcation

Within the context of an election based on a proportional method, the work consisted of establishing a certain number of electoral divisions for the entire province; these divisions would be the new territorial ridings for the members. The demarcation of these electoral divisions was conducted on the basis of the following parameters:

(a) to constitute territories with sufficient population to permit the allocation of three seats, the minimum number required to apply the principle of proportionality;

(b) to tend toward an average number of voters per seat (or the voter-to-member ratio) that corresponds to the average number on the present electoral map, about 36 000 voters per electoral seat, and in this manner, respect the principle of the equality of each voter's vote;

(c) to divide the province in a manner so that the electoral division boundaries respect the existence of regional county municipalities (RCMs) and municipalities within the urban communities.

In addition to this general approach, there are the following more specific parameters that permit the boundaries of electoral divisions to be adapted to characteristics of the Québec milieu:

(d) to establish territories that, insofar as possible, distinguish urban and rural environments;

(e) to give a premium of one additional seat to territories with low population density dispersed over large regions;

(f) to establish an electoral division for the lands of the Cree, Inuit and Naskapee nations that will be represented by one member elected under the single-member, one-ballot majority system.

2. Hypothesis 1

2.1 Demarcation of divisions

Number and voter population - see Table 1

This hypothesis envisages an electoral map divided into 22 ridings, with one riding reserved for the Cree, Naskapee and Inuit nations.

These ridings are of different sizes and the number of voters per riding varies from 77 489 voters on the North Shore to 565 593 voters in the central Montréal electoral division.

Composition

In the countryside, with a view to harmonizing the electoral division boundaries with those of the RCMs, 14 divisions would be created by essentially grouping areas with socio-economic affinities and similar community feelings. These divisions are all characterized by the presence of small or medium-sized urban centres surrounded by rural areas.

Urban electoral divisions

In the countryside, in order to avoid splitting the RCMs into different divisions, it has not been possible to set up solely urban divisions, with the exception of the RCMs of Laval and Champlain that are located within the urban extension of the Island of Montréal.

Elsewhere, the Québec City Urban Community (QUC) and the Regional Community of Outaouais (RCO) constitute sufficiently populated urban nuclei to permit the establishment of urban-type ridings. However, in the present hypothesis, they have been associated with their neighbouring RCMs.

In the case of the RCO, this result can be explained by the fact that the RCMs in the Outaouais area do not have sufficient voters to form their own electoral division (37 102 voters).

In Québec City, the surrounding RCMs on the North Shore have a total population of 83 453 voters and could therefore be made into one electoral division. However, from a geographical viewpoint, one may question the cohesiveness that would exist in an electoral division associating Portneuf RCMs with Charlevoix RCMs in the absence of the urban hub provided by Québec City.

The Montréal electoral divisions are accordingly the only ones where the boundaries correspond with those of the MUC. These electoral divisions are made up of a number of municipalities. Montréal, however, has been split up because of its size. Accordingly, the boundaries of electoral sectors have been respected.

The establishment of 3 electoral divisions within the MUC cannot, however, be based solely on considerations of a geographic nature. In fact, there is, on the Island of Montreal, a certain relationship between the degree of homogeneity of the population and the number of electoral divisions created. The more electoral divisions there are, the more homogeneous the electoral division is. However, an excessive number of ridings would restrict the emergence of new political ideas and the minimum number of votes necessary to obtain a seat would exceed 5%. In fact, the appropriate number of electoral divisions for the Island of Montréal can be determined on the basis of other non-geographic considerations.

Table 1 Voter population per electoral division - Hypothesis 1

Electoral Divisions	Voters 1981*
The Cree, Inuit and Naskapee territories	6 848
North Shore	77 489
Gaspésie - Iles-de-la-Madeleine	95 934
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	119 286
Lower St. Lawrence	130 950
Lanaudière	134 794
Bois-Francs	135 841
Yamaska	145 961
Outaouais	160 149
Chateauguay	174 562
The Eastern Townships	178 805
Laval	180 272
Champlain	182 348
The Mauricie	182 960
Saguenay - Lac-Saint-Jean	193 277
Richelieu	199 159
Montréal East	211 263
Appalaches	240 896
The Laurentians	243 818
Québec	411 675
Montréal West	437 396
Montréal Centre	565 593
TOTAL:	4 409 276

* The number of registered voters according to the Report of the official returns of the 13 April 1981 election as provided by the Chief Electoral Officer for Québec.

2.2 Distribution of the seats

Differentiation on the basis of milieu

The seats for each electoral division are allotted by first establishing the differences between the electoral divisions created.

A comparison of population densities (in municipal areas) gave rise to the first distinction between strictly urban electoral divisions and those made up, to varying degrees, of urban and rural areas. (See Table 2)

Accordingly, the three electoral divisions on the Island of Montréal, as well as the electoral divisions for Laval and Champlain, fall unequivocally into the first category with densities varying between 1 903 and 3 643 inhabitants per square kilometer. The remaining divisions are much further back with populations of between 3.7 and 87.6 inhabitants per square kilometer.

Each division was then allotted a number of seats where the average number of voters would vary according to the distinction made; consequently, an average of 40 000 voters for densely populated territories and an average of around 35 000 for other territories were proposed.

This differentiation arose from observations made during the hearings on the differences between the rôle of an urban member and his rural counterpart.

Determination of the allocation of premium seats

Because of the dispersal of their population, certain electoral divisions were allocated one additional seat to compensate for the immense distances that their elected representatives (members) have to cover. Two main criteria have been adopted: distance and population density.

The notion of distance is applied by considering in the same electoral division the maximum distance between the two municipalities located farthest apart but that are, however, connected by an easily identifiable road. A study was carried out for the six largest electoral divisions, that is, the divisions where there existed the possibility of giving an additional "distance" seat (see Table 3).

Table 2 Population density by electoral division

Electoral division	Population density (inhab./km^2)
North Shore	3.7
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	8.4
Gaspésie - Iles-de-la-Madeleine	14.2
Lower St. Lawrence	15.9
Outaouais	19.4
Appalaches	23.5
The Eastern Townships	25.2
Saguenay - Lac-Saint-Jean	27.2
Bois-Francs	28.5
The Laurentians	34.4
Mauricie	34.6
Lanaudière	34.6
Yamaska	56.6
Chateauguay	72.2
Québec	73.9
Richelieu	87.6
Laval	1 093.5
Champlain	1 711.6
Island of Montréal*	3 643.9

* i.e. the three electoral divisions in the MUC.

The population density was calculated by dividing the total population of an electoral division by the total area of the municipally organized parts of the electoral division. The Indian reserves and the localities, hamlets, etc., located in non-municipally organized areas were not taken into consideration in order to avoid distorting the findings.

Table 3 Distance and population density in certain electoral divisions

Electoral Divisions	Population Density (inhab./km^2)	Maximum Distance (km)	Municipalities Considered
North Shore	3.7	659	Tadoussac to Havre-Saint-Pierre
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	8.4*	725	Témiscamingue to Chibougamau
Gaspé and Iles-de-la-Madeleine	14.2	711	Baie-des-Sables to Matapédia
Lower St. Lawrence	15.9	303	La Pocatière to Causapscal
The Laurentians	34.4	256	Rosemère to Saint-Anne-du-Lac
Mauricie	34.6	240	Maskinongé to Lac-Édouard

* Calculation excludes the Municipality of James Bay.

After evaluating these electoral divisions on the basis of the 2 factors adopted, distance and population density, it was determined that 3 divisions would be eligible for an additional member. They were: the North Shore, Abitibi-Témiscamingue and the Gaspé-Iles-de-la-Madeleine. Although the population densities of the electoral division of Gaspé-Iles-de-la-Madeleine and of the Lower St. Lawrence are the same, the road distances are not the same. Highway 132 represents the only access road to the Gaspé peninsula and the terrain of the region contributes to a sense of isolation. In addition, approximately 250 kilometers of sea separates the Iles-de-la-Madeleine from the town of Gaspé, which is the principal urban centre in the Gaspé.

The results - see Table 4

A total of 125 seats was distributed. With the exception of the single member riding, the number of seats allotted to each electoral division varied from 3 to 14.

Comparing these results with the present situation, the Island of Montréal is the only area that will have its level of representation fall. Its number of seats drops from 33 to 30.

Elsewhere, the level of representation remains essentially the same with the exception of the remote electoral divisions of Abitibi-Témiscamingue and of the North Shore that each gain an additional seat.

It should be noted that under this hypothesis, the Iles-de-la-Madeleine do not constitute a separate electoral division. Rather, they form part of the same division as the Gaspé. As a result, the number of seats allocated to the division of Gaspé-Iles-de-la-Madeleine does not change from the present 4 seats. If the voter-to-member ratio of 35 000 were applied, this electoral division would only receive 3 seats. However, it benefits from an additional seat for the reasons explained above.

The electoral division of Abitibi-Témiscamingue has the highest level of representation with an average of 23 857 voters per seat compared with the electoral division of Montréal-East with 42 252 voters per seat. The variation from the provincial average (35 274) accordingly oscillates from -32% to +20%.

However, if the premium or additional seats are not taken into consideration, the variation is from -17% to +17%.

Table 4 Hypothesis 1 - Electoral division statistics

Voters 1981*:	4 409 276
Number of electoral divisions	22, including 1 special case
Number of seats	125
Provincial average per electoral division (or voter-member ratio)	35 274

Electoral Divisions	Voters 1981	Number of seats Now	Proposed	Average per seat	Variation**
Cree, Inuit, Naskapee territory	6 848	-	1	6 848	-
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	119 286	4	5***	23 857	-32%
North Shore	77 489	2	3***	25 829	-27%
Gaspésie - Iles-de-la-Madeleine	95 934	3+1 exception	4***	23 983	-32%
Lower St. Lawrence	130 950	4	4	32 738	- 7%
Appalaches	240 896	7	7	34 414	- 2%
Bois-Francs	135 841	3 1/2	4	33 960	- 4%
The Eastern Townships	178 805	4 1/2	5	35 761	+ 1%
The Mauricie	182 960	5	5	36 592	+ 4%
Lanaudière	134 794	3 1/2	4	33 699	- 4%
The Laurentians	243 818	6 1/2	7	34 831	- 1%
Richelieu	199 159	5 1/2	6	33 193	- 6%
Yamaska	145 961	3 1/2	4	36 490	+ 3%
Chateauguay	174 562	5 1/2	5	34 912	- 1%
Outaouais	160 149	5	5	32 029	- 9%
Saguenay - Lac-Saint-Jean	193 277	5	5	38 655	+10%
Québec	411 675	11	11	37 425	+ 6%
Champlain	182 348	4 1/2	5	36 469	+ 3%

continued

Electoral Divisions	Voters 1981	Number of seats Now	Proposed	Average per seat	Variation**
Laval	180 272	5	5	36 054	+ 2%
Montréal-West	437 396	9 + 5 (p)	11	39 763	+13%
Montréal-East	211 263	3 + 4 (p)	5	42 252	+20%
Montréal-Centre	565 593	12 + 9 (p)	14	40 400	+15%
TOTAL	4 409 276	122	125		

* The number of registered voters according to the Report of the official returns of the 13 April 1981 election, as provided by the Chief Electoral Officer for Québec.

** Variation from the provincial average.

*** A "premium" seat because of the dispersal of their population.

(p) in part

3. Hypothesis 2

3.1 Demarcation of divisions

Number of electoral divisions - see Table 5

In the second hypothesis, the electoral map is divided into 24 electoral divisions. As in Hypothesis 1, a single-member riding has been created for the Cree, Naskapee and Inuit areas. Generally, the map drawn up under Hypothesis 2 is similar to that under Hypothesis 1. However, four new electoral divisions have been added: Québec City, Trois Rivières, Chicoutimi and Rive-Nord-de-Montréal.

Composition

The creation of these 4 electoral divisions flows from the principle that governed the structure of this hypothesis, namely to encompass the important urban areas within their own electoral divisions. In this light, the respect of the bounderies of the RCMs has become a secondary consideration. Certain RCMs have been divided in order to permit the grouping, within urban-type electoral divisions, of municipalities with an urban character.

This new approach to the demarcation of the electoral map is an attempt to stress the differences existing between the rôle of members representing urban areas and members from rural areas. At the same time, this hypothesis seeks to ensure the emergence of small parties or new ideologies in the large urban centres through the creation in urban areas of electoral divisions containing several seats.

Accordingly, the MUC is divided into two electoral divisions.

The other urban electoral divisions are:

- Laval;
- Champlain which, on the South Shore, encompasses the urban fringe extending from Boucherville to Sainte-Catherine;
- The Rive-Nord-de-Montréal which is in fact located north of Laval and includes all the riverfront towns from Repentigny to Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac
- Québec which encompasses the QUC and the municipalities that are the southern extension of the Québec urban area, from Lévis to Saint-Nicolas;
- Chicoutimi including the towns of Jonquière and La Baie;

- and Trois-Rivières, its metropolitan area and the riverfront municipalities from Saint-Maurice to Grand-Mère.

For the last two electoral divisions, it should be mentioned that they are, in fact, made up of small and medium-sized urban centres whose spatial distribution does not necessarily form a single concentration of people (e.g. Trois Rivières - Shawinigan). However, the small distance separating the different centres justifies the creation of these electoral divisions in that the rural areas surrounding the urban centres contain sufficient voters to create a second electoral division.

For this reason, it was not possible to isolate the urban centres of Hull and Sherbrooke from their rural surroundings.

Table 5 Voter populations per electoral division - Hypothesis 2

Electoral division	Voters 1981*
Cree, Inuit and Naskapee area	6 848
North Shore	77 489
Montmorency	83 453
Gaspé - Iles-de-la-Madeleine	95 934
Chicoutimi	98 456
Saguenay - Lac-Saint-Jean	103 373
Lanaudière	103 936
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	110 734
Trois-Rivières	117 164
Lower St. Lawrence	130 950
Rive-Nord-de-Montréal	136 228
The Laurentians	138 448
Yamaska	145 961
Chateauguay	155 146
Outaouais	160 149
Richelieu	165 848
The Eastern Townships	178 805
Laval	180 272
Appalaches	192 525
Mauricie-Bois-Francs	201 637
Champlain	235 075
Québec	376 593
Montréal-West	522 650
Montréal-East	691 602
Total:	4 409 276

* The number of registered voters according to the Report of the official returns of the 13 April 1981 election, as provided by the Chief Electoral Officer for Québec.

3.2 Distribution of seats

Under this hypothesis, the determination of the number of seats to be allotted to each electoral division rested essentially on the two parameters set out at the beginning, namely:

- to attempt to have the average number of voters in each electoral division correspond to the average under the present electoral map (36 000);

- to give a premium or additional seat to electoral divisions with small populations dispersed over large regions.

Accordingly, and unlike the first hypothesis, the urban electoral divisions are accorded a representation relatively equal to that of the other divisions. However, peripheral electoral divisions (or those far from the large centres) will be overrepresented through the mechanism of the allotment of premium or additional seats. On the basis of the same criteria as those used in Hypothesis 1, population density and distance, the same electoral divisions in both hypotheses are designated to receive an additional seat: Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the North Shore and Gaspé - Iles-de- la-Madeleine.

3.3 The results - See Table 6

Under this hypothesis, 127 seats are distributed. With the exception of the single-member riding of the Cree, Naskapee and the Inuit, the number of seats allotted to each electoral division varies from 3 to 19. It will be noted that the urban electoral divisions of Montréal and Québec will have the largest number of seats.

By comparison with the present situation, the proposed electoral divisions maintain essentially the same number of members. However, the divisions of Champlain and of the Appalaches will lose some of their representatives. With respect to the level of representation, the variation from the provincial average oscillates between -31% (Gaspé - Iles-de-la-Madeleine) and +13% (Champlain). By eliminating the premium seats added, the extent of variation decreases to between -22% and +10%.

Table 6 Hypothesis 2 - Electoral division statistics

Voters 1981*:	4 409 276
Number of electoral divisions	24, including 1 special case
Number of seats	127
Provincial average by electoral division (or voter-member ratio)	34 719

Electoral Divisions	Voters 1981	Number of seats Now	Proposed	Average per seat	Variation**
Cree, Inuit, Naskapee territory	6 848	-	1	6 848	-
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	110 734	4	4***	27 683	-20%
North Shore	77 489	2	3***	25 829	-26%
Gaspésie - Iles-de-la-Madeleine	95 934	3+1 exception	4***	23 983	-31%
Lower St. Lawrence	130 950	4	4	32 738	- 6%
Appalaches	192 525	6	5	38 505	+11%
Montmorency	83 453	2 1/2	3	27 817	-20%
Mauricie - Bois Francs	201 637	6 1/2	6	33 606	- 3%
The Eastern Townships	178 805	4 1/2	5	35 761	+ 3%
Lanaudière	103 936	3	3	34 645	0%
The Laurentians	138 448	3 1/2	4	34 612	0%
Richelieu	165 848	5	5	33 169	- 4%
Yamaska	145 961	3 1/2	4	36 490	+ 5%
Chateauguay	155 146	4	4	38 786	+12%
Outaouais	160 149	5	5	32 029	- 7%
Saguenay - Lac-Saint-Jean	103 373	3	3	34 458	- 1%
Chicoutimi	98 456	2	3	32 819	- 5%
Trois-Rivières	117 164	2	3	39 055	+12%
Rive-Nord-de-Montréal	136 228	3 1/2	4	34 057	- 2%
Laval	180 272	5	5	36 054	+ 4%

continued

Electoral Divisions	Voters 1981	Number of seats Now	Proposed	Average per seat	Variation**
Champlain	235 075	6 1/2	6	39 179	+13%
Québec	376 593	9 1/2	10	37 659	+ 8%
Montréal-West	522 650	12 + 5 (p)	14	37 322	+ 8%
Montréal-East	691 602	16 + 5 (p)	19	36 400	+ 5%
TOTAL:	4 409 276	122	127		

* The number of registered voters according to the Report of the official returns of the 13 April 1981 election, as provided by the Chief Electoral Officer for Québec.

** Variation from the provincial average.

*** A "premium" seat because of the dispersal of their population.

(p) in part